

UNIVERSITY OF ST. MICHAEL'S COLLEGE



3 1761 02162134 7





30/-

GEORGE RUNDLE PRYNNE

Crown 8vo, 3s. 6d.

THE TRUTH AND REALITY OF THE
EUCCHARISTIC SACRIFICE.

Proved from Holy Scripture, the Teaching
of the Primitive Church, and the
Book of Common Prayer.

BY

GEORGE RUNDLE PRYNNE, M.A.

LONGMANS, GREEN, AND CO.

LONDON, NEW YORK, AND BOMBAY



A. P. Steer, Photo.

W. L. Wells & Co. N. Y.

Yours most sincerely
G. R. Pyne

GEORGE RUNDLE PRYNNE

A CHAPTER IN THE EARLY HISTORY
OF THE CATHOLIC REVIVAL

BY
A. CLIFTON KELWAY

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS

LONGMANS, GREEN, AND CO.

39 PATERNOSTER ROW, LONDON

NEW YORK AND BOMBAY

1905

All rights reserved



PREFACE

ECCLESIASTICAL events are moving rapidly, and in these days there is perhaps some danger of the past being speedily forgotten. It is surely regrettable that this should be the case ; for the lessons to be derived from the past, and especially from the early stages of the Catholic Movement, have a very real and useful bearing upon the present situation, and may help to a wise and peaceful solution of some existing difficulties.

The life of George Rundle Prynne takes us back to those early years, in the story of which his figure stands out as that of a pioneer who won back for Catholics in the Anglican Communion some precious parts of their rightful heritage. The restoration of the Daily Eucharist, after the lapse of centuries, was undoubtedly Prynne's first and greatest work. As the Bishop of Fond du Lac has lately affirmed, it is to "a general daily revival of the Eucharist that the victory of the Anglican Church will be given."¹ With Prynne all else that, under God's blessing, he was able to achieve accorded with that memorable and

¹ "Christian and Catholic" (Longmans), p. 168.

great revival. The vindication of the Sacrament of Penance, the development and organization of Sisterhood work in parishes, the provision of Eucharistic teaching and devotions in a form previously unknown to members of the Anglican Communion—these and the other things which George Rundle Prynne set himself to accomplish, were the natural and logical outcome of his complete devotion to our Blessed Lord and his vivid realization of the Divine Presence in the Sacrament of the Altar.

To such pioneers we surely owe an affectionate remembrance. To ourselves and to them do we not owe a careful study of their life's work, and a serious attempt to ascertain how far we have followed the lines they laid down with so much wisdom, patience, and good judgment? Such consideration of root principles may well increase the veneration of younger Catholics for those good men who, when days were darkest, and friends few, broke up the fallow ground, and recalled the Church of England to long-forgotten ways and splendid traditions. It may also help a generation which some one has described as being always in a hurry, to look deeper than it is wont to do, and not to confuse essentials with non-essentials, or to substitute the outward signs for the things whereof they are intended to teach.

To take one point for example. The practice of this old Tractarian in the 'forties, and the preaching of the Bishop already quoted in the present day, point alike to one supreme necessity—the general

daily revival of the Holy Eucharist at the altars of the Anglican Communion. More than fifty years after the recovery of this priceless gift, and in days when the circumstances of that restoration are well-nigh forgotten, how do we stand in this matter? How far have the Catholic clergy emulated Prynne's example on this all-important point? We know that the Daily Eucharist is still far from general, that the "victory of the Anglican Church" is still postponed, while the necessity for that victory becomes more and more urgent every day.

The consideration of such questions as these may well give pause to Catholics of to-day. Those old pioneers, or many of them at any rate, were entirely ignorant of modern Roman cults; they knew little, and cared less, about innumerable other and minor points which are sometimes permitted to engross such a disproportionate amount of attention to-day. But they laboured patiently and suffered contentedly for the essentials of faith and practice; and in this, surely, their example is worthy of attention and imitation by Catholics of the present generation. In this direction, as in so many others, the experience of the past is surely the wisdom of the future.

The task of compiling this biography has been rendered somewhat difficult owing to the absence of the usual materials. Prynne only kept a diary, and that a brief one, for three years of his long life, from 1845 to 1848; moreover, the majority of those with whom he corresponded on matters of general interest

have long since died, and very few of his letters have been obtainable. Some of the newspapers which reported the chief incidents of his early career are now no longer in existence, and their files impossible of access.

The writer is considerably indebted to Mr. T. W. S. Godding, of Plymouth, for valuable help in examining and putting together much of the material in the early chapters of the book; and to Mrs. Brine, Dr. Pusey's only surviving daughter, for giving permission to print a selection of her father's letters to Mr. Prynne.

A. CLIFTON KELWAY.

JUNIOR CONSTITUTIONAL CLUB, LONDON,
All Saints' Day, 1905.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER I

	PAGE
Birth and Parentage—A Famous Ancestor, William Prynne— Christening and Childhood—Reminiscences of Early Life in Cornwall—School and College—Ordination and First Curacy at Tywardreath—Cornish Superstition and Belief in Witchcraft—Curacy of St. Andrew's, Clifton (1843)—Recom- mendation to Sir Robert Peel	1

CHAPTER II

Meeting with Dr. Pusey—Prynne and the Vicarage of St. Saviour's, Leeds—Appointment to a New District at Par— His Father's Death—Removal to SS. Levan and Sennen— Dr. Pusey on Wesleyanism—Appointment to St. Peter's, Plymouth (1848)	16
-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	----

CHAPTER III

Dr. Philpotts and the Oxford Movement—The Gorham Case— The Church in the Three Towns—Creation of New Parishes —The District of St. Peter's—Eldad Chapel—Prynne's Marriage to Miss Fellowes (1849)—Opening of Church and Schools—Protestantism in Plymouth—The Beginning of the Agitation—The introduction of Alms-bags—Interview with Bishop Philpotts—Plymouth Memorial to the Primate (1848)—Dr. Pusey on the Wisdom of Moderation	25
-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	----

CHAPTER IV

The Cholera at Plymouth (1849)—The Work of Miss Sellon and her Sisters—Horrors of the Visitation—The Bishop's	
------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--

	PAGE
Sympathy—Institution of the Daily Eucharist at St. Peter's (1849)—The Rev. G. H. Hetling on the Work of the Devonport Society	48

CHAPTER V

Alteration of the Old Church—Consecration by Bishop Philpotts—The Bishop and Miss Sellon's Community—Foundation of a Permanent House—Dr. Pusey on the Success of the Sisterhood—Protestant Agitation against the Community—Charges made by the Rev. J. Spurrell—Prynne's Reply . .	60
------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	----

CHAPTER VI

Prynne and the Sacrament of Penance—Complaint to the Bishop—Serious Allegations against Prynne—Prynne's Statement to the Bishop—Legal Action recommended—Disastrous Result of an Earlier Action for Libel—The Bishop's Enquiry at Plymouth (1852)—Letter from J. D. Chambers—Dr. Pusey on the Enquiry—Complete Exoneration of Prynne	70
------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	----

CHAPTER VII

The Vindication of Confession—Opinion of the Local Press—Dr. Philpotts on Confession—Prynne's Statement of his Position—Congratulatory Letters from Dr. Pusey, Dr. Neale, J. D. Chambers, and Rev. C. Gutch—Renewed Agitation and Further Charges against Prynne—Confirmation and Riot at St. Peter's—Newspaper Comments—Result of the Persecution—The Bishop's attitude	92
------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	----

CHAPTER VIII

Development of Parochial Work—The Society of the Holy Trinity—The Revival of the Religious Life—Bishop Philpotts and the Sisterhood—Extension of the Society's Work—Prynne and Miss Sellon—Estrangement from Dr. Pusey—Dr. Neale and the East Grinstead Sisters—Mother Kate's Reminiscences of St. Peter's—The Wantage Community—Prynne on the growth of Sisterhoods (1887)—Rescue Work at Plymouth	115
---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----

CONTENTS

xi

CHAPTER IX

	PAGE
Parochial Organization—Degraded Character of St. Peter's District—Erection of the Chapel of the Good Shepherd (1862)—Creation of All Saints' Parish—Provision of New Day Schools—Prynne on Religious Education—Formation of Parochial Guilds—The Society of the Love of Jesus—Prynne and the Roman Catholic Communion—Rev. J. Leycester Lyne and St. Peter's—Prynne and Parochial Missions—A Lenten Pastoral (1866)	132

CHAPTER X

Generous Benefactors of St. Peter's—The New Church—Explanatory Document—Consecration of St. Peter's (1882)—Some of Prynne's Characteristics—Presentation and Address (1884)—Proctorship to Convocation—Transference of Parochial Patronage to Keble College—The Incumbency of All Saints'—Prynne's Theological Position	152
-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----

CHAPTER XI

Prynne's Relations with his Diocesans—The Lambeth Opinion of 1899—Perplexing Alternatives—Correspondence with Bishop Bickersteth—Discontinuance of the Liturgical use of Incense in response to the Bishop's "Godly Admonition"—Resignation of the Rev. H. H. Leeper—Communicants' Memorial to the Bishop—Restoration of Incense and introduction of Reservation—Prynne on the Evil of Internal Divisions	167
---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----

CHAPTER XII

Prynne's Jubilee at St. Peter's (1898) and Golden Wedding (1899)—Death of Mrs. Prynne—Sermon at Truro Cathedral Commemoration—Last appearance at St. Peter's—Final Illness and Death—Episcopal Sympathy—Funeral Services at Plymouth and Plympton St. Mary—Prynne and Preferment—Personal Reminiscences by "E. M. G.," Mr. John Shelly, Mr. Paul Swain, F.R.C.S., and others	191
----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----

CHAPTER XIII

	PAGE
Prynne's Theological Works—The "Eucharistic Manual"—The Real Presence—Non-communicating Attendance—Archbishop Longley and the "Eucharistic Manual"—Prynne's Profession of Faith—Second Eucharistic Work—Dislike of Mere Ritualism—Obedience to Episcopal Authority—"Pardon through the Precious Blood"	220

CHAPTER XIV

An Early Hymnal—Association with "Hymns Ancient and Modern"—"Jesu, Meek and Gentle"—Circumstances of its Composition—Collected Poetical Works—A Hymn of the Annunciation	237
------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----

APPENDIX

THE PRYNNE MEMORIAL	243
INDEX	247

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

	TO FACE PAGE
PORTRAIT OF THE REV. G. R. PRYNNE . . .	<i>Frontispiece</i>
<i>From a Photograph by A. P. Steer of Plymouth.</i>	
THE OLD CHURCH OF ST. PETER'S, PLYMOUTH	60
THE REV. G. R. PRYNNE	82
<i>From an old Drawing, 1849.</i>	
ST. PETER'S, PLYMOUTH, SHOWING THE PRYNNE MEMORIAL	154
<i>From a Photograph by A. P. Steer of Plymouth.</i>	
PRYNNE'S GRAVE AT PLYMPTON ST. MARY	196
<i>From a Photograph by Bernard F. Prynne.</i>	

GEORGE RUNDLE PRYNNE

CHAPTER I

Birth and parentage—A famous ancestor, William Prynne—Christening and childhood—Reminiscences of early life in Cornwall—School and college—Ordination and first curacy at Tywardreath—Cornish superstition and belief in witchcraft—Curacy of St. Andrew's, Clifton (1843)—Recommendation to Sir Robert Peel.

GEORGE RUNDLE PRYNNE was born in the little fishing village of West Looe, in Cornwall, on August 23, 1818. He came of an ancient family, the Cornish branch of which is stated to have originated from Resprynn, in the parish of Lanhydrock, near Bodmin. The family name has at various times been indiscriminately spelt, Pryn, Prynn, Prynne, Res Prynne and Rex Prynn. Mr. Bruce, in his "Biographical Fragment," says the name was derived from the gentle eminences which may be seen from the Wenlock Ridge, and which were originally called "Preens," signifying points. The Prynnes, according to this authority, were called De Preens, which ultimately degenerated into De Pryn, and then Prynne. The accuracy of this derivation cannot, however, be admitted, unless it can be shown that it has an anterior and superior claim to the authority, over that hereafter advanced, or implied. There were branches of the family in Cornwall, Devonshire, Herefordshire, Wiltshire, Worcestershire, and Gloucestershire, all

bearing the same arms, *i.e.* Or, a chevron gules, between three boars' heads sable, with motto, *Fides præstantior auro*; and this, together with the ancient records, establishes the great antiquity of the family. Indeed, as far as can be ascertained, the name seems to be the most ancient family name which occurs in English history, being the only one mentioned in "The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle."¹ Subsequent to the removal of a branch of the family to Aust, there appears to have been a re-grant of the old arms to the Salop Prynnes: "Prynn or Resprynn, Or, a chev. gu. betw. three boars' heads sa. *Fides præstantior auro*. Prynn (co. Salop), granted by Delhick Garter, 1588, to Edward Prynn of Co. Salop. (Harl. MSS. 1069): Or, a fess ingr. az. betw. coronet or, an eagle displ. p.p. and beaked sa. *Deo adjuvante*."

Lord Clarendon, in his "History of the Great Rebellion," spells the name Pryn; so, too, does Walker in his book on the "Sufferings of the Clergy," first published early in the eighteenth century. Archbishop Laud, in his speech at the "Censure of Prynn and Bastwick," published in 1637, spells the name in three ways—Pryn, Prynn, and Prynn, in the same document.

¹ "And Eadbert, who by a second name was named Pryn, obtained the kingdom of Kent" (A.D. 794). "This year Kenulf, King of the Mercians, laid waste Kent, as far as the marshes, and took Pryn, their King, and led him bound into Mercia, and let his eyes be picked out and his hands be cut off" (A.D. 796) (*Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*). "Eadbert Pryn was descended from Ethelbert (first Christian King of Kent), who was descended from Hengist, the Saxon conqueror" (*vide* Hume, "History of England"). Ven. Bede says, "Hengist and Horsa (the latter of whom was slain in battle by the Britons) were the sons of Victgilsus, whose father was Vecta, son of Woden; from whose stock the royal race of many provinces deduce their original."

Gilbert, in his "Historical Survey of Cornwall" (1820), spells the name Prynn, and has this to say concerning its origin:—

"The surname of this family, which was formerly written Res-prynn, is supposed to have originated from Res-prynn, in the parish of Lanhydrock. The co-heiress of this family married Whitley, whose heiress married Granville of Stowe and Carmenowe, and the arms are still to be seen at Penheale among the quarterings of the Granville family, viz. argent, a chevron gules, between three boars' heads sable. There are younger branches of the same house still residing in the eastern part of Cornwall."

Mention has been made of the most famous member of this very ancient family, William Prynn, that sturdy Puritan ancestor of George Rundle Prynn, whose life and death occupy so prominent a place in the annals of the seventeenth century. At this early stage of our memoir it is not without interest to notice the leading characteristics of the great Puritan, whose energy and zeal were admittedly the outcome of deep conscientious convictions, and who was so absolutely fearless, though too often bitter and uncharitable, in his condemnation of what he deemed to be the excesses of Church and Court in his day. The record of the following pages will fail in its purpose if it does not disclose in William Prynn's nineteenth-century descendant like sincerity of conviction and absolute fearlessness in time of persecution. The characteristics of both men were somewhat alike. They both laboured consistently to achieve those ends

they had placed before them; but in their methods and views no two men, surely, could have been more diametrically opposed to each other. Remembering how great was the gulf which separated the Prynne of the seventeenth century from the poet-priest of the nineteenth, it is amusing to note that in a lantern-lecture on "Famous Hymns and their Authors," issued by a well-known firm, and which has attained wide popularity, a picture of "Prynne in the Pillory" has for years been shown as that of the author of the beautiful little hymn, "Jesu, meek and gentle." The error has only been remedied very recently.

Returning to the subject of our biography, we find that early in his life—probably very soon after his father's death, in 1847—he appears to have revived the old spelling of Prynne. While at Cambridge he had called himself Prynn, as all the rest of his family did, and his Letters of Orders (1841-42) are so made out.

His father, John Allen Prynn, was a native of Newlyn East, Cornwall, where he was born, March 3, 1775. He was one of ten children, among whom the proceeds realized by the sale of the family estate at Newlyn were divided on the death of their father, William. The property was sold for £20,000, but almost immediately after its transfer the value of the estate was greatly enhanced by the discovery of a rich lead-mine upon it. This helped to make the fortune of the new proprietor. John Allen Prynn married, in 1802, Susanna, daughter of John and Mary Rundle, of Looe. She died in 1833, when George was fifteen years of age. There were eight children of this

marriage, six sons and two daughters. Of the latter, the elder, born in 1805, married a Mr. Kempe, son of the vicar of Fowey, and brother of Prebendary Kempe, of Merton. George Prynne was indebted for his earliest education to this sister, who during his childhood kept a small school at Looe, thus helping out the family resources; these had been somewhat strained by an unfortunate building speculation at West Looe, which had swallowed up the money put into it by the father. Of the other children, five—one daughter and four sons—died at a comparatively early age, the death of the eldest son, John Allen, at nineteen, being a life-long grief to his mother. Dr. Edward Prynne, the eldest surviving son, practised in Cornwall, and later in Plymouth, and died at the age of seventy, in 1886.

Though born in 1818, George's christening was delayed until 1821, when, with his brother Alfred, he was baptized at Stoke Damerel Church, on the Feast of the Annunciation. In nearly every case the children of the family were not received into the Church until some time after their birth, and Mrs. Prynn was not baptized until 1810, five years after the birth of her eldest child. Nevertheless, she was a deeply religious woman, and ever endeavoured to instil religious principles into her children. Moreover, both she and her husband were Church people. But the state of the Church in the villages of England early in the last century was not conducive to strictness of discipline on the part of its members. In a fragment of autobiography which, alas! was never completed, George Prynne thus speaks of the period in question:—

“There was, I think, no place of Church worship in Looe in those days. Talland, the parish church of West Looe, was three miles off, over very steep hills, and St. Martin’s, the parish church of East Looe, about a mile up a very steep hill. We were generally, I think, as young children, taken to one of the dissenting meeting-houses in the town, for, although my father and mother were Church people, yet they thought it better to take us to dissenting meeting-houses than that we should not join in some public act of worship on Sundays. Church people were very lax in those days, for Church principles had not been taught in Looe for probably several generations.”

The family left Looe in 1826, when George was eight years old, his father having been appointed to a position in the Customs’ service at Fowey. It is probably the fine old church of St. Finbarras at Fowey, long since worthily restored, that forms the setting of the following reminiscences of George Prynne’s youthful days :—

“I can remember the grand old church to which I was taken every Sunday, and the great square pew in which I was boxed up, and the seats all round from which the family circle looked at each other, or, when they knelt, turned their backs on each other. The whole church was fitted with pews of a similar character. I remember the parson’s desk, and the clerk’s desk, and their alternate reading of the verses

of the Psalms, in which very few of the congregation ever joined, for the clerk's responses, though in a monotone, were not musical or easy to join in. The altar was blocked out of sight altogether by the high square pews, but the Holy Communion was celebrated there once a month, I was told.

"There was a high gallery at the west end of the nave, which was reached by a steep flight of stairs, and to this gallery, which had the Royal Arms in front, the clerk went to give out some verses of one of the metrical Psalms composed by Messrs. Tait and Brady. Hymns of any kind were not considered orthodox or correct in those days. The aged vicar then went to the pulpit in a black gown and read a sermon, and so the service ended. It was certainly not a lively function, and was not calculated to aid the devotions of the congregation; but this is the style of service to which our puritanical friends seem anxious to restore us. It was certainly a style of service which by its formality, coldness, and deadness, tended very greatly to fill the dissenting meeting-houses, and led people away from the Church of their Fathers to some form of modern religionism which seemed to give them greater warmth—more sensational hymns, and more exciting preaching."

In the days of his boyhood, George lived a good deal with his mother's brother, Mr. Charles Rundle, at Stoke Damerel, and, when of an age to do so, he was sent to Mr. Southwood's Classical and

Mathematical School, at Devonport—an educational institution of some note, which adjoined Admiralty House, the residence of the Commander-in-Chief, at Mount Wise.

Intended from the beginning to take Holy Orders, his course of life and education was all along designed to fit him for this vocation. This he attributes to the wishes and prayers of his mother, who, in speaking to him of the choice of a profession, would say, "I would rather see you a pious clergyman than King of England." During his schooldays at Devonport, he was confirmed in St. Andrew's, the mother church of Plymouth, by Bishop Philpotts of Exeter. From Devonport he proceeded to Cambridge, matriculating at St. John's College in October, 1836, at the age of eighteen. He did not, however, go into residence at St. John's, but migrated to St. Catherine's, where he took his B.A. in January, 1840, and his M.A. some years later. Later in his life Oxford gave him the degree M.A. *ad eundem*. On September 19, 1841, he was admitted to Deacon's Orders by Bishop Philpotts at Exeter Cathedral, and was licensed to the curacy of Tywardreath, in his native county of Cornwall, which then formed part of the diocese of Exeter.

Tywardreath, of which the Rev. Charles Lyne, Prebendary of Exeter, was the vicar, was at that time a large and scattered parish, midway between Lostwithiel and St. Blazey, and included the district now known as Par. In addition to the parish church at Tywardreath, there were chapels-of-ease at Golant and Tregaminion, near Fowey, and much time was necessarily spent by the clergy in riding or walking between the three places of worship which had to be

served on Sunday. It was a convenient sphere of work for the young curate, as his father was at that time residing at Fowey, of which parish his sister's father-in-law, Mr. Kempe, was vicar. His brother Edward, also, was settled not far away. The parish of Tywardreath was large and populous, its inhabitants consisting mainly of miners and agricultural labourers. The prevailing religion there, as in so many districts of Cornwall, was Wesleyanism, and Prebendary Lyne was wont to urge with voice and pen the unlikeness of modern Wesleyanism to the principles and plans of John Wesley. In order to assist his vicar in these controversial labours, young Prynne read all the writings of John Wesley—not those in the "Journal" only, but all that were contained in the *Arminian Magazine* and other publications. In the result he declares, "I found abundant matter to prove that John Wesley, to the end of his days, never wished his followers to forsake the Church of England."

Speaking at a later date of the people among whom his first ministerial work was accomplished, Mr. Prynne furnishes some striking illustrations of those superstitions and beliefs in the power of witchcraft, which still, to some extent, obtain in the remoter parts of Cornwall:—

"They (the people of Tywardreath) were certainly superstitious, and strong believers in witchcraft and the power of the evil eye, and evil-wishing was very prevalent among them. Some striking incidents strongly illustrating this made a lifelong impression on me. There was an old woman, living with an imbecile son, in a hut by

the roadside near the village of Golant, who was commonly reputed and believed to be a witch. There was a good deal of excitement and talk about her and her doings in the neighbourhood, and her hut was said to be quite unfit for human habitation. My vicar, who was a local magistrate, accompanied by some others, went to see if this report was correct, and found it was but too true, and the poor old woman was removed to clean, tidy rooms in the village of Golant. I went to visit this reputed witch in her new abode, and found a decrepit old woman, very helpless and off her head, and not over happy in her new quarters. The peculiarity of her previous abode, the unaccountable way in which she managed to pick up her living, were, I think, the only grounds which first fixed suspicion upon her, and then, when people called after her and persecuted her, I have no doubt that in her half crazy anger she uttered a good many evil wishes in very excited words against her tormentors.

“ But the excitement caused by the supposed witchery of this old woman was as nothing compared to what was soon afterwards raised in the village of Tywardreath itself. One day a young man was brought home from the mine on a stretcher, dead. He had been killed by an accident, not a very rare occurrence amongst miners, but on this occasion the villagers were in a high state of excitement. They declared that the young man had been evil-wished by a witch called Jenny Broad, living in the village, who they averred had had words with him that very

morning, and had wished he might be brought home dead. I knew Jenny Broad well. I had chatted with her by her own fireside, and she evidently liked my visits—for no other reason that I know of except that I suppose I conversed with her naturally. She was about fifty years of age, a woman of strong character and strong feelings, and of intellectual capacity certainly above the average of her neighbours. I cannot think how it was that the suspicion of being a witch was fixed on her, as she had neither a hooked nose nor a humped back, but was a clean, well-grown and respectable-looking woman. I did my best to allay the storm that raged against her, but in vain. A fresh incident occurred that added fuel to the excitement. A miner was suddenly taken ill, and as the cause of his illness was not known, poor Jenny was accused of having laid a spell upon him and his family, and the neighbours said he could not recover until the spell was removed. The only question was how this difficult job was to be effected. The sapient decision arrived at by the experts was that it could only be done by a White Wizard. It was ascertained that there was one living at Mevagissey, and he was promptly sent for. His arrival caused a great sensation. I was visiting the sick man as a matter of duty, and found the White Wizard in the room. He was a small, wizened-looking old man, and as I regarded him as a miserable impostor, our interview was not of an amicable character. Of course I did my best to persuade the sick man and his family of their

sin and folly, but I fear I was not very successful in shaking their belief in witchcraft and its proper antidote. The excitement was so great as to put the village in a regular uproar. A special meeting of magistrates was called, and the White Wizard was taken into custody and brought before them. The largest room in the principal village inn was crammed with an excited crowd. I was present, and only regret that I did not take notes of one of the most extraordinary examinations I ever attended. The upshot was that the White Wizard was bound over to keep the peace and was ordered out of the village. Several persons were examined in connection with the matter, but on what grounds I do not remember. One thing, however, was elicited from one of the persons examined which could not fail to stamp itself sharply upon my memory—it was the receipt for becoming a black witch. The process related was so shockingly wicked, involving such a terrible profanation of the Blessed Sacrament, that I shrink from recording it. Certainly if any thing could utterly harden the heart, kill conscience, and transfer the will to the keeping of Satan, it would be difficult to imagine any process more likely to effect these objects."

In this atmosphere of Wesleyanism and withcraft George Prynne laboured for two years, going up to the cathedral at Exeter for his ordination to the priesthood on September 25, 1842. The revival in Church life associated with the Oxford movement had

not yet penetrated to this remote part of England, but Prebendary Lyne would seem to have belonged to the old-fashioned school of high Churchmen of pre-Tractarian days, and the parish appears to have been well worked, a celebration of the Holy Eucharist being provided monthly at the parish church. Evening services, too—on Fridays at Tywardreath and on Thursdays at Tregaminion—were notable in days like these, when many incumbents of the Exeter diocese had to be compelled to reside in or near the parishes entrusted to their charge. The young curate's chief work here seems to have been teaching in the schools and instructing the village boys in the then almost unknown art of chanting. In his diary for July 16, 1843, he notes that the service was chanted for the first time at Tregaminion, a large congregation being present; and on August 6 of the same year there is the entry, "Mr. Lyne preached for the first time, on Sacrament Sunday, in his surplice." This was at Tywardreath Church, where the communicants on that occasion numbered fifty-eight. Five years later, at St. Sidwell's, Exeter, the mob attacked Mr. Courtney with dangerous violence because he ventured to obey his bishop's direction and preach in a surplice. Tywardreath, therefore, would seem to have been somewhat in advance of many other parishes in this matter.

Though he had not yet come under the full influence of Catholic teaching, George Prynne, even in those early days, attracted attention for the definiteness of his teaching on the subject of the Holy Eucharist. Complaints were made about his preaching at Tregaminion Chapel, and this led to two of his

sermons being condemned by his vicar on the ground that their teaching savoured of Transubstantiation. Nevertheless, he was undoubtedly in considerable request as a preacher, and was frequently asked to occupy the pulpit at Fowey, St. Blazey, and other neighbouring churches.

In the autumn of 1843, having decided that it would be well to leave Tywardreath, he first endeavoured to obtain a naval chaplaincy, and afterwards applied for a curacy at Lyndhurst, in the New Forest, but without success. Being offered the curacy of St. Andrew's, Clifton, he bade farewell to Tywardreath on December 18th, going immediately to his new sphere, where he remained for three years as second curate to the Rev. James Taylor. Clifton was, in many respects, a more congenial sphere of work than Tywardreath, and his diary discloses the fact that the young priest was far happier there than he had previously been. One of his colleagues at St. Andrew's, Clifton, was Mr. Woodford, who afterwards became Bishop of Ely. Prynne had charge of a very poor district, and here he soon began to display that gift for mission work among the poor, which he subsequently developed to such splendid purpose. While Prynne was working there several new districts were carved out of the old and unwieldy parish of Clifton. It was suggested that one such district should consist of Mardyke, the locality of which Prynne had special charge. The scheme was not carried out at the time, but the following letter from Mr. Taylor to Sir Robert Peel indicates the high opinion which the young priest speedily earned at Clifton :—

“Clifton, Jan. 13th, 1845.

“SIR,

“May I be permitted with the profoundest respect to solicit your patronage in favour of my curate, the Rev. George Rundle Prynne, who is anxious to obtain the appointment to the Mardyke district in my parish about to be assigned under the late Act. Wapping and Whitehall do not more differ from each other than do the separate parts of my parish. Mardyke and its vicinity are the Wapping of Clifton.

“I have had full experience of Mr. Prynne, and can bear testimony to his fervent zeal in the discharge of his duties, especially of his attention to the poorer part of our population. Should you be inclined to favour this application, I will answer for him that he shall not be like too many others whom I have known, though beneficed elsewhere, yet setting up their domicile in the fashionable part of Clifton, and from thence occasionally and by snatches repairing to the performance of their clerical duties; but shall be content to be located and shall constantly abide among these destitute people, and shall do his diligence gladly to promote both their temporal and eternal interests. I have the honour to be, Sir,

“Your most respectful

“and obedient humble servant,

“JAMES TAYLOR,

“Incumbent of Clifton.

“To the Rt. Hon. Sir Robert Peel, Bart.”

CHAPTER II

Meeting with Dr. Pusey—Prynne and the Vicarage of St. Saviour's, Leeds—Appointment to a new district at Par—His father's death—Removal to SS. Levan and Sennen—Dr. Pusey on Wesleyanism—Appointment to St. Peter's, Plymouth (1848).

IT was at Clifton that George Prynne first came under the influence of Dr. Pusey, who was frequently there, visiting his daughter, and who on several occasions celebrated and preached at St. Andrew's Church. Introduced to Dr. Pusey at the early service on Christmas Day, 1843, when the great leader was celebrant, the acquaintance soon seems to have deepened into friendship. Prynne's diary about this time contains many references to Dr. Pusey, whose influence is seen in such matters as the more careful observance of fasts and Saints' days, and daily attendance at Divine worship, a record of which appears. At this time, too, the young priest began to hear confessions as a regular part of his ministerial work. That Pusey estimated the character of George Prynne very highly is evident from the urgency with which he pressed him to join the clerical staff of St. Saviour's, Leeds, at one time thinking of him as a suitable incumbent of that notable church, in the stormy days that marked its early history after the first secession to Rome. Pusey's idea, however, as

he explained to Prynne, was to establish there a college of celibate priests, living in common; and Prynne, though he did not disclose the fact just then, was at that time contemplating matrimony, and was, indeed, practically engaged. He felt, therefore, that he could not fulfil the conditions. Nevertheless, the idea had its attractions for Prynne, and we find Pusey alluding to it again at a later date, as in the following letter, written six months after the young priest left Clifton:—

“MY DEAR MR. PRYNNE,

“I hear that had St. Saviour's been unprovided for, you would not have been unwilling to have undertaken the charge. I need not say that I am sorry it is provided for, for that would be to disparage the valuable person whom God, I hope, gave us at last, the Rev. A. Forbes, of B.N.C. I had often thought of you in my perplexity, as I have habitually prayed for you, with reference to that life since our conversations some time past; for I knew of no hindrances except, as I thought, that your departed father did not appreciate it for you. So I often had you in my thoughts, but I thought that you were placed elsewhere, and that I had no business to disturb you; so I did nothing, and I had applied to Forbes before your first intimation came to me that you might possibly be disposed to accept it. I should have valued this bond between us, and should have been thankful if it had been a comfort to you.

“I do not know Mr. Forbes' age, nor indeed

yours, very well ; nor how far it would suit you to take part in that work, he being vicar. We hope that a second church will be built soon in the district. You know, I believe, the plan. Four clergy (at present) to live together in the midst of a population of six thousand souls, bound by no pledge, in great simplicity and, I suppose, what we deem poverty—indeed in poverty yet not austerity (for which the fatigues of the Church would be unsuited) ; their congregation a very affectionate one, a beautiful church, good schools, in the midst of dissension and a system of espionage at present, frequent services, and weekly communions. It is a very promising field.

“ But here I cannot give an opinion. I know not whether your ages might not make it unfitting for you to be living under Forbes, though as brothers ; and after the sad mistake I made in sending Macm. there, I keep from recommending coadjutors. It is a grave step, for although there are no pledges, still it is desirable that they who go there should have their hearts in the direction of desiring to give themselves to the Lord without distraction.

“ I have been sorry to hear privately that you have had much distress. But God does not take anything from us without replacing it by His own love, if we seek it of Him.

“ May His love be with you.

“ In Him, yours affectionately,

“ E. B. PUSEY.

“ Tuesday after Ascension Day, 1847.”

St. Saviour's, Leeds, with all its splendid possibilities, was indeed a promising field; but, looking back over the past sixty years, may we not say that God had other plans for this young priest of His Church—that for him work was to be found in another portion of the great Vineyard? Pusey assisted financially in the funds raised by Prynne for building a school in his district, and also wrote him as to a conditional promise of £500 towards providing a new church there.

On June 18, 1846, a letter came to Prynne from Mr. Lyne, his former vicar at Tywardreath, offering to recommend him to the Bishop of Exeter and to Sir Robert Peel as vicar of a new parish at Par, about to be carved out of Tywardreath. Prynne hesitated some time, but ultimately accepted the offer, and received his nomination from Sir Robert Peel just before that statesman went out of office in 1846. It is easy to understand Prynne's hesitancy in deciding to leave Clifton, where the work had proved congenial and he had formed various attachments. Amongst other things, he had, while there, attained some reputation as a preacher, as his volume of "Sermons Preached in the Parish Church of St. Andrew, Clifton," and published in October, 1846 (Ridley: Bristol), gives evidence. Of these sermons the *English Churchman*, at that period a leading exponent of the Catholic cause, said that they were of the rare class which fully justify their publication. "As sound, practical, and edifying discourses, we can very strongly recommend them." On the other hand, the young clergyman, to whom family ties were ever of the strongest, did undoubtedly desire to be near his

father, whose health was failing; and there were other private reasons which prompted a return to his former sphere of work. He left Clifton in October, 1846, going immediately to his charge in Cornwall, and receiving a letter of welcome from Bishop Philpotts on his return to the diocese.

Early in the following year (January 14, 1847) his father died. He felt the loss very deeply, and thus records his grief in his diary on the day of the funeral:—

“Followed the body of my dear father to his grave, and saw the earth thrown over him who loved me as his own life. More lonely henceforth am I on this earth, for not one now remains to love me as he loved. May God forgive me whatever I have done in wilfulness or disobedience against my kind, fond, affectionate father. May He grant that the loss of one I loved so well may be made the means of drawing away my mind from seeking happiness in things of this world, and fix my affections more fully on God, Heaven, and Eternity. And whilst I again go forth to my labours, may the thought never leave me that all joys here are fleeting, and that the only true happiness is that arising from a pure conscience and the love of God.”

This was in many respects a trying year in George Prynne's life. Besides the keen sorrow caused by the loss of his father, he had troubles of a private nature, that caused him intense mental and bodily distress. His record of these troubled days, as given

in his diary, shows very clearly the transparent simplicity of young Prynne's character, and the pain which even an apparent deflection from his high ideal of conduct caused to his extremely sensitive conscience. Eventually, in August, 1847, he left Par for the parish of SS. Levan and Sennen, near the Land's End, having apparently effected an exchange with the priest who had been at St. Levan, and who now took over Prynne's uncompleted work at Par. During his ministry there Prynne had raised funds for building a new church, a site having been obtained from Col. Carlyon and the plans made by Mr. G. E. Street. The preparation of these plans was Mr. Street's first work on his own account in the profession he ultimately adorned so highly. Prynne's removal to St. Levan was effected at the Bishop's suggestion, Dr. Philpotts proposing it as a temporary charge. "until something could be found better suited to your talents and energies." At St. Levan and St. Sennen there were again two churches to be served, and the young priest found himself (as in his first Cornish curacy) riding or walking considerable distances to his Sunday services. He enjoyed the wild romantic scenery of the Cornish coast, and spent much leisure-time climbing and sketching. But he felt the loneliness of the place, the remoteness of which was at that time far greater than it now is, and he consulted Dr. Pusey as to the advisability of asking a brother priest to reside with him. Dr. Pusey replied as follows:—

"MY DEAR MR. PRYNNE,

"Thank you for your account of T. L. and yourself. I am not sorry it is so. It seems

much more natural that you should have others living with you, as you have virtually had the charge of parishes for some years though as a Curate. But I should be glad to hear of your having some one living with you with whom you might have common devotions and common thought, whether a younger Clergyman or (for which the Bishop of Exeter is well disposed) one to be trained for Holy Orders. We want labourers so much that any one who can train any is doing good service.

"Then, too, it would be a comfort to yourself, although *the* comfort is to be in any way drawn nearer and into more continual intercourse with God.

"May He be ever with you,

"Yours affectionately,

"E. B. P."

At St. Levan, as at Tywardreath, Prynnne found Wesleyanism, so-called, very much *en evidence*; the following letter indicates that he consulted Dr. Pusey in regard to it:—

"MY DEAR PRYNNE,

"I have acted at once upon your letter and am much obliged to you for sending me the information, and shall be obliged to you at any time to tell me of any things you think I ought to know.

"These distractions of our poor Church are very sad, yet we shall have peace when God wills. 'O pray for the peace of Jerusalem.' I

cannot but hope that Wesleyanism might still be recovered. Confession seems to take the place of their 'relations of experiences,' and absolution of their 'present salvation.' If the Church withholds her gifts, human nature will crave them and make some substitutes for them. Dr. Hook, you know, told a body of Wesleyans that he would be 'their class-leader,' and so win them back to the Church. The Wesleyans had a fervour of devotion which found no food in the stiff writings of last century. They may yet find in the Church what is more real than what they now feed on, and grow reverentially fervid.

"God be with you alway,

"In Him your affectionate,

"E. B. P.

"St. Saviour's is again vacant. I thought of you, yet regarded your answer as decisive. It is offered, not yet accepted."

The letter is undated: the allusion in the post-script, however, fixes it about the time (October, 1847) when Forbes resigned St. Saviour's on his election to the Bishopric of Brechin. It is probably the letter referred to by Prynne as being received on October 11th,—at a moment when he was engaged in defending Dr. Pusey from the attacks of correspondents in the Truro paper, the *West Briton*.

The work in this isolated district was indeed discouraging, especially to a young priest like Prynne, who had attained some fame and success during his ministry at Clifton. Congregations of half a dozen

or less at either of the two churches ; four communicants only on Christmas Day ; services to which no one came,—conditions like these were disheartening indeed. Yet his diary shows that he plodded on, starting Sunday schools, teaching the children on week-days—for there was no day-school in the place then—and doing what he could to improve the character of the services, even at the risk of offending his only friend and supporter, Mr. Trembath. This gentleman, churchwarden of the parish, threatened to resign if Prynne persisted in reading the Prayer for the Church Militant. But though isolated, the young priest was not forgotten, and early in 1848 he learnt from the Bishop of his probable appointment to one of the populous districts of Plymouth. Eventually he received from Dr. Philpotts the offer of the incumbency of the new district of St. Peter's, Plymouth, to take up the duties of which he finally left Cornwall in July, 1848.

CHAPTER III

Dr. Philpotts and the Oxford Movement—The Gorham Case—The Church in the Three Towns—Creation of new parishes—The district of St. Peter's—Eldad Chapel—Prynne's marriage to Miss Fellowes (1849)—Opening of church and schools—Protestantism in Plymouth—The beginning of the agitation—The introduction of alms-bags—Interview with Bishop Philpotts—Plymouth memorial to the Primate (1848)—Dr. Pusey on the wisdom of moderation.

IN order to realize the courage displayed by Dr. Philpotts in appointing a man of such pronounced views as those held by George Prynne to an important charge in his diocese, it is well to recollect the ecclesiastical conditions of those days, general and local. If, with Newman, we take Keble's famous Assize Sermon as the start of the Oxford movement, the great revival had already been making itself felt within the Church for close upon fifteen years. Three years earlier, in October, 1845, the movement had sustained its most terrible blow in the secession of John Henry Newman. This, and other disasters of lesser magnitude, had imparted redoubled vigour and increased bitterness to a revival which had from its inception been regarded with general and deep-rooted hostility. Nevertheless, the movement was making itself felt, particularly among the more earnest of the parochial clergy, and among some of the more eminent public men, chiefly those who had been educated at Oxford. The masses of the population

were almost without exception strongly and violently opposed to the revival, and the bishops, or nearly all of them, hated the movement and trampled on the defenceless clergy who identified themselves with it. What Archdeacon Denison called the "anti-theological" element of the English mind revolted against the definite teaching and fearless speaking which came from the leaders of the Oxford movement. People of all classes were fanatically determined to oppose the introduction of any ceremonial which savoured, as they fancied, of Popery, with all its attendant evils. Moreover, the Government, with Lord John Russell at its head, detested the members of a party which did not hesitate to resist the imposition of a man like Dr. Hampden upon the See of Hereford. Prynne, at this time thirty years of age, was not only a member of the abhorred party, but was also known to be a friend of its strongest and most prominent leader, Pusey.

Locally the ecclesiastical situation was exceptionally strained by reason of the Gorham case, which in point of date overlapped that of Dr. Hampden. On November 2, 1847, the Rev. G. C. Gorham was presented by the Lord Chancellor to the living of Brampford-Speke, Devonshire. Upon the occasion of his presentation to another living, St. Just-in-Penwith, just previously, Bishop Philpotts had not been satisfied with Mr. Gorham's views on the subject of Holy Baptism, believing them to be inconsistent with the teaching of the Church. Having examined Mr. Gorham, and being dissatisfied, Dr. Philpotts refused to institute him. Mr. Gorham took his case to the Court of Arches, where judgment was given against

him ; and then to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, which decided in his favour (March 8, 1850). The Bishop still refusing to institute, Mr. Gorham was instituted by the Dean of Arches, acting on the Primate's authority. During the whole course of the Gorham case public feeling was highly excited, the Bishop's printed letters, and other literature bearing upon the affair, being eagerly bought by thousands in the streets of the metropolis. The Surplice Riots which took place at Exeter, to which allusion has already been made, afford another indication of the excited and violent state of public feeling in the diocese regarding matters ecclesiastical at the time of Prynne's appointment to St. Peter's, Plymouth.

Dr. Philpotts—"Henry of Exeter," as he was generally termed—differed from the majority of his episcopal brethren in that he did not display the dignified apathy which was at that time the leading characteristic of the bench. Ruling an immense diocese, which included the whole of Devonshire and Cornwall, he was essentially a man of vigour—a great man in every sense of the word. Early in his episcopate he recognized that it was in the growing centre of naval and military life, known as the Three Towns, that the Church in his diocese would be forced to face her most acute problem. It was here that the Church needed her ablest and most vigorous priests, if the spiritual needs of the large and ever-increasing population of Plymouth, Stonehouse, and Devonport were to be met. To one of the new districts in this great centre George Prynne came at the Bishop's call in the summer of 1848.

Early in that year Dr. Philpotts had issued a

special appeal for help to relieve the spiritual and moral destitution of the great seaport, whose population, like that of many another big town at this period, had hopelessly outgrown all existing provision for religious teaching and worship. The Bishop asked for at least four new churches; additions to the small endowments of some of the existing clergy; and "for schools on an ample scale and in larger number." Advantage was taken of the Act of Parliament passed in 1843, "An Act to make better provision for the spiritual care of populous parishes"—usually called the Peel Act—to create three new parishes in Plymouth,—St. Peter's, St. James-the-Less, and St. John's, Sutton-on-Plym. The two former were taken out of the parishes of St. Andrew's, Plymouth, and East Stonehouse; the latter out of Charles' parish, Plymouth.

Of these new districts the one which most greatly stood in need of help and oversight was undoubtedly St. Peter's. The population of St. Andrew's parish was returned at 23,564 in 1841, and by 1848 it had largely increased. The new district assigned by the Bishop under the Act was about three-quarters of a mile square, and at that time contained a population of about five thousand. With the exception of one corner, the district was inhabited by poor people, and was well known as one of the most poverty-stricken and degraded in Plymouth. With the exception of a small Latter-Day Saint chapel, whose chequered career terminated soon after the creation of the new parish, no place of worship existed for those five thousand souls. St. Andrew's and Stoke Damerel churches were respectively half a mile distant. Truly

here was an ideal field for that missionary activity and those powers of organization which George Prynne had already given promise of.

Upon the creation of St. Peter's district in 1847, the Crown—which under the Peel Act presented alternately with the Bishop—appointed as incumbent the Rev. Edward Godfrey, whose first object was to provide a church for his people. In regard to this endeavour Mr. Godfrey was fortunate in finding an empty and closed proprietary building, known as Eldad Chapel, standing in a central and elevated part of the new district. This chapel had been erected in 1830 by the followers and admirers of the Rev. J. Hawker, who, after a curacy of thirty years at Stoke Damerel, had seceded from the Church of England as a protest against Catholic Emancipation. The building was, of course, never consecrated, and, Mr. Hawker having died, it was closed and for sale. Ugly and unsightly as it was, the building was adapted for public worship, and its situation was excellent. With the Bishop's help and sanction it was purchased from the trustees who held it, £3,550 being given for the chapel and its fittings. The actual purchase was not complete when, in May, 1848, Mr. Godfrey, after six months' incumbency, accepted an Indian chaplaincy, and resigned charge of St. Peter's. In a letter giving his solicitors power of attorney in regard to the funds obtained to purchase the chapel, Mr. Godfrey expressed the hope that it would be consecrated as speedily as possible, and that the district might thus become a parish under the Act. Looking back over the intervening years, it is strange to reflect that Mr. Godfrey, the first incumbent of St. Peter's, has

survived his successor, living through Prynne's long incumbency of fifty-five years.

In going to Plymouth, on Mr. Godfrey's resignation, George Prynne found himself on familiar ground. He had been much in the Three Towns in his schooldays, and when visiting the Rundles at Stoke. Indeed, his aunt, Mrs. Rundle, was a follower of Hawker, belonging to Eldad Chapel in the days of that erratic cleric's ministry. Prynne, in his diary (December, 1844), mentions a service he had attended in the chapel, when "Mr. Hawker delivered a wandering, unconnected string of words, after mangling the Church prayers, omitting the Absolution, the Litany, etc., *ad libitum*." Little could he then have thought that within four years he would himself be officiating as vicar within the same chapel. Prynne was instituted to the new district, August 16, 1848, and a fortnight later Eldad Chapel was formally licensed for Divine Service as the Church of St. Peter's, Plymouth, the Ecclesiastical Commissioners guaranteeing an income of £150 per annum, £50 of which was conditional upon the provision and consecration of the church.

Prynne, just thirty years of age, entered on his work with vigour and hope. Recalling this period of his life, some thirty-five years later, he observes :—

"It may be thought that I was presumptuous in undertaking such a task, under such conditions. Could I have foreseen all the difficulties and anxieties which were before me, probably I should have shrunk from it; but God in His wisdom does not always enable us to see and

measure the weight of the cross which He wills us to bear. I was young and sanguine, and eager to carry out the work which my bishop had given me to do. I set to work earnestly to do what I could, trusting that if I did so, God would send me help."

Immediately Eldad Chapel was licensed, the young vicar began services in it, without waiting for the completion of the alterations which were needed to make it more suitable and churchlike. These alterations included the throwing out of a chancel, the removal of the hideous galleries, and the provision of an organ. The latter necessity was met by the generosity of a young lady to whom he had been recently introduced, and whom he soon afterwards married, Miss Emily Fellowes, the second daughter of Rear-Admiral Sir Thomas Fellowes, C.B., at that time stationed in the Three Towns. They were married in St. Andrew's, the mother-church of Plymouth, on April 17, 1849, and for more than fifty years this lady was his devoted wife and helper. Mr. G. E. Street, then a rising young architect, and with whom Prynne had already had dealings in regard to the new church at Par, designed a small chancel, work on which was begun as speedily as funds could be raised.

After the church, the great need of the parish was an elementary school; and Prynne thus tells how he first met this necessity:—

"The only room I could find for the purpose was a loft over a sawyer's yard, to which the

only access was a flat step-ladder. I hired it at once, and fitted it up as best I could with some roughly-made desks and second-hand forms. A modern school-inspector would be shocked at such crude arrangements for education, so different to all the grand buildings and patent fittings which prevail now; but then the Church was struggling with all her might, and almost single-handed, to rescue the poor from their degrading ignorance. I engaged a master at a very small salary, and my room was soon filled with boys from the roughest part of my district. I never dropped that work. It was the nucleus of the large and efficient schools which now exist in the parish. As time went on, I was able to secure a larger room, then one for girls, then to build schools for boys, girls, and infants; but my mind turns back with a strange interest to that little beginning of educational work amongst my poor in that rude loft."

The old Eldad Chapel was first opened as St. Peter's Church in November, 1848, and the occasion marks the beginning of that long battle between Catholicism and Protestantism which was to rage around its walls, and in which George Prynne was destined to play so splendid a part. Plymouth, hitherto, had been practically untouched by the Catholic movement, which in those comparatively early days had only affected isolated parishes scattered up and down the land. The two principal churches of the town, St. Andrew's and Charles, were in the hands of pronounced Evangelicals, and in each the "parson and

clerk" type of religion prevailed, to the exclusion of all decency and beauty. The late Rev. R. Barnes, whose incumbency of Holy Trinity, Plymouth, began about the same time that Mr. Prynne commenced work at St. Peter's, has told how in those days, on what was called "Christening Sunday," a crowd of low characters was wont to gather around the doors of St. Andrew's Church, eagerly offering to stand sponsors in return for sixpence or a pint of beer. The incident sufficiently indicates the low ebb to which, in Plymouth as elsewhere, Church life had fallen. True, even at this time, some attempt to hold up a higher ideal was being made, daily services being held in a little semi-proprietary building called St. Andrew's Chapel—now St. Catherine's Church—which was frequented by the few who sympathized with Tractarian teaching. But it had little influence on the town, and its services were quite devoid of anything in ritual or teaching sufficiently pronounced to be attacked. Plymouth at that time, even more perhaps than now, was a Nonconformist stronghold. All through its latter history the town has stood as the champion of Puritanism and Independence—two words which accurately summed up its Church tone at the period of which we speak. The teaching and practices of the newly-appointed incumbent of St. Peter's, therefore, at once attracted attention and provoked hostility in such an atmosphere. Moreover, it seems that his reputation as a Puseyite had preceded him in Plymouth, which explains the strong and evidently organized opposition to which he was subjected even on the first occasion of the opening of the church. There is no evidence that at this or at

any future time in his career as vicar of St. Peter's Prynne found himself in opposition to his genuine parishioners, or that they ever formed part of the disgraceful band of agitators whose proceedings rendered St. Peter's famous, and themselves notorious, during this early period of the development of the Catholic movement.

The charges brought against him in these bygone days seem astonishingly trivial now, but they were brought with violence, and had to be met with seriousness at the time. They include, chiefly, the use of the surplice in the pulpit—which had given rise to the Surplice Riots in London and Exeter; chanting the Psalms and intoning the service; bowing at the Name of Jesus; omitting a prayer before the sermon; reading the Prayer for the Church Militant instead of closing Morning Service with the blessing from the pulpit after the sermon; and the substitution of alms-bags for plates in the collection. It is difficult now to understand the seriousness with which these things were regarded or the excited opposition they aroused. Allowance must, of course, be made for the inflamed temper of the time, which caused Popery to be suspected in the most trivial steps towards obtaining greater decency of service. Such recollections can alone explain the portentous solemnity of a leading article like that which appeared in the principal local paper, the *Plymouth Herald*, the day after the introduction of alms-bags at St. Peter's. It was headed, "The Judas Bag at St. Peter's," and the article was quite in keeping with its title. As to the antipathy displayed towards any outward sign of reverence at the Holy Name, the Plymouth people did not stand alone;

for, more than ten years later (1861), Bishop Waldegrave of Carlisle publicly rebuked from the pulpit of Lowther Church some young persons who observed this pious custom. In London, moreover, Bishop Blomfield, alarmed at the result of his injunctions concerning obedience to the rubrics, was seeking to retract his previous orders in the matter of the surplice, hoping, doubtless, to quell the riot which its adoption had raised. Facts like these throw some light on such events as those that marked the early days of Prynne's ministry at St. Peter's, Plymouth.

The Plymouth opposition to the Tractarian movement as exemplified at St. Peter's was undoubtedly an organized opposition, in this respect resembling that which had to be met in many other Catholic churches, like St. George's-in-the-East, and St. Barnabas, Pimlico, about the same time. Again, as in London so in this provincial town, it was engineered by the Press, the slightest change in the services at St. Peter's exciting storms of execration and abuse against "Priest Prynne" from the chief local newspaper—now defunct. Was the prayer before the sermon to be discontinued? Then would "the fires of Smithfield soon be lighted in our midst." The introduction of alms-bags aroused a hope that the "man" responsible for so iniquitous a change would "receive the sack, and be no more accounted a guide of the orthodox Church." No language was violent enough to denounce "the vagaries which he (Priest Prynne) has introduced into what he calls the celebration of Divine worship." To Press and people, unfortunately, must be added many of the local clergy, and, notably, the vicar of St. Andrew's, Plymouth's

mother-church. This gentleman, the Rev. J. Hatchard, showed himself a determined and unscrupulous opponent of Prynne from the beginning, and, acting through the instrumentality of a handful of retired service men, was the chief ringleader of the agitation for some years.

The first active sign of opposition took the form of a remonstrance addressed to the new vicar; and a meeting of protest was held on the Friday after the church was opened, which Prynne attended, endeavouring to conciliate the protesters. It may be that his enemies thought thus early to terrorize the young priest and spoil his work at the outset, but if so they were strangely ignorant of the man with whom they had to deal. Prynne never once showed signs of wavering, but, fearless and determined, pursued the course which he held to be right, regardless of disturbances within his church and demonstrations without, abuse from the Press and from the platform, threats of personal violence and numerous other manifestations of ill will. In all his long struggle, moreover, he was splendidly backed up and sustained by the calm and judicious support of his bishop, the famous "Harry of Exeter." Looking back along the years of steady Catholic progress in Plymouth to that initial struggle, it is difficult adequately to express our appreciation of Dr. Philpotts' conduct at that time. He was in every sense a true Father in God, perfectly fearless and entirely impartial; a strong ruler of men, yet conciliatory and fair to a degree that compelled the admiration even of his bitterest opponents. The history of the Catholic movement proves that its triumph has never been dependent on episcopal

approval; but it is safe to say that its success in Plymouth would neither have been so speedy nor so sure had it not been for the able direction and advice of Bishop Philpotts during his long rule of the Exeter diocese. From the beginning of the crisis Prynne consulted his diocesan, winning his confidence by so doing, and gaining the help of an invaluable counsellor. On the very day following the first demonstration the young vicar received this letter from Dr. Philpotts :—

“Bishopstowe, December 2, 1848.

“DEAR SIR,

“I have received a letter by this morning's post, informing me that there is great probability of a riot, if you preach in your surplice to-morrow.

“Now, although I think that the surplice is the more proper vestment to be worn in the pulpit in Morning Service, yet as the Law of the Church is not imperative, or entirely clear, on this point, I advise you not to hazard a disturbance, if there be (as I am informed) any likelihood whatever of this occurring.

“Such an incident might be productive of serious prejudices against you and your ministry.

“I am, dear Sir,

“Yours sincerely,

“H. EXETER.”

Prynne at once went to Torquay to see the Bishop, who, in the following letter, embodied the advice given at this interview :—

"DEAR SIR,

"In order that you may clearly understand the full meaning which I wished my words to you this day to convey, I think it best to state it to you in writing.

"I have read the paper which contains the communications made by you to certain individuals of your district, in answer to a remonstrance on the manner in which Divine Service was performed by you on Sunday morning last, when the licensed building was opened for that purpose.

"On the first particulars, the use of the surplice in the pulpit, in the morning, I have no hesitation in saying that I esteem it the proper vestment, and that the changing your dress twice (as it will be necessary for you to change it twice, in order that you may perform the rest of the service) is offensive to every reasonable person, and has something in it really like Popish form, which the preaching in the surplice has not. At the same time, bearing in mind the success which has attended the efforts of mischievous persons elsewhere to rouse the feelings of the ignorant on this subject, and as there is no express law of the Church on the point, I do not advise you to persist in the use of the surplice.

"To the second particular I have nothing to say. Whether the Litany shall be chaunted or simply said, is a matter left to your own discretion by the Church; and if you are satisfied that the larger part of your congregation would

wish to avoid chaunting, I do not forbid you to yield to that wish, if it can be done without encouraging a sinful spirit of wilfulness—prescribing to their minister in matters on the fitness of which he is to judge.

“With respect to the third particular, their requiring you to say a short prayer before the sermon, I cannot advise you to submit to such dictation. It is true that in modern times it is customary to say such a prayer ; but it is a very modern custom, for there was an express Royal order by one of the Kings George—forbidding it as contrary to law, and requiring the observance of the 55th Canon.

“I am glad to find that this manifest innovation is in many places changed for the proper usage ; and I will not encourage a lawless and presumptuous attempt on the part of a small portion—and surely not the most exemplary or religious portion—of the laity to force a clergyman to a violation of laws, both of Church and State.

“I am, dear Sir,

“Your faithful friend and brother,

“H. EXETER.

“P.S.—It is painful to see that there are any persons in your district who show themselves insensible, as they are doing, to the value of that great blessing which it has pleased God, in His way, to give them, in now having a Church instead of a conventicle. That Church must not only be a Church in name but in truth.

Your prayers will not be wanting to your active endeavours to bring back a long misled people to the service of Almighty God in His Church.

“May His grace be with you and them. May He give you a right judgment in all things. Especially may He give you the spirit of firmness and constancy in things which you deem necessary; tempered by a discreet regard to the feelings of others in matters on which the Law of the Church leaves you at liberty, and by an ardent desire and longing for the edification of those whose souls are committed to your care. Lastly, may the spirit of Christian love reign in the hearts of yourself and of your people, so that whatever of misunderstanding may have marked the outset of your connection, the end may be to you all, Peace on Earth and Glory in Heaven.”

This letter apparently produced a good effect, for the disturbances threatened for December 3 did not occur, the objectors contenting themselves with marching out of church as soon as the Prayer for the Church Militant was announced. As to the almsbags, the Bishop wrote (December 3, 1848) forbidding their use as “clearly wrong,” and “an advantage to the adversary.” He adds: “I gave this direction in another place.” Prynne informed the Bishop of the good effect produced by his lordship’s letter, and at the same time complained that he had reason to fear that the Vicar of St. Andrew’s, Plymouth, was at the back of the agitation, and sought permission to vindicate himself and the bishop, who in his turn had

been attacked by the Press for countenancing and defending the Vicar of St. Peter's. Here is the Bishop's reply :—

“Bishopstowe, December 6, 1848.

“If you give anything to the public, I hope you will include your being asked whether I had ever ‘commanded you to use the surplice,’ and your answer that I had not.

“So far as my memory goes, I never gave you any special directions of any sort respecting the mode of celebrating Divine Service. If I am right in this recollection, I should like its being made public also. For the same reason, I wish it to be known, that on having learned you had made the collection in bags, I had written to you, expressing my disapprobation and desiring that it should in future be made in a basin, as directed by the rubric.

“Did I *ever* give you any directions respecting celebration of Divine Service before Saturday last as embodied in my letter to you?

“Your P.S. contains a very important statement. Have you any objection to inform me of the grounds on which you say the Vicar of St. Andrew's is the author of a letter which you state appeared in the *Record* some short time since, saying that I ‘had appointed a young man to the district of St. Peter's, Plymouth, fully pledged to carry out my sectarian views’?”

The following letters from the Bishop dealt further with this very serious allegation and with the situation generally :—

"December 14, 1848.

"I had much pleasure in hearing a statement in a newspaper which was read to me, that on Sunday last all went off quietly and well at St. Peter's, and that you had a large congregation.

"It is clear, therefore, that you need no vindication to protect you from the consequences of Mr. Hatchard's most reprehensible proceeding. Under these circumstances you can afford to spare him any further exposure. . . . But I hereby state, and authorize you to state to every one, that it is utterly untrue that you were appointed to St. Peter's under any pledge whatever. Nothing was said respecting the performance of your duties either in Church or out of it. I had not heard any special account of your performance of them elsewhere. I only knew that you had gained the respect and affection of populous parishes in which you had been minister, and that you had published a volume of sermons pronounced to be excellent by persons of competent qualifications to judge. You owed your appointment solely to your high character."

On December 17th a meeting was held at the Royal Hotel, Plymouth, "to take into consideration the propriety of memorializing His Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury (Dr. Longley) in reference to the present alarming state of the Church of England, and of this diocese in particular." It is significant of the excitement which existed that over a thousand persons attended this gathering, at which the resolution was carried and a memorial to the Primate adopted.

Writing with reference to this meeting, the Bishop asks some pertinent questions: "Is it supposed that Mr. Hatchard or other clergy have promoted the meeting? Are the requisitionists nominal Churchmen, or any of them avowed Dissenters? I see the names of three admirals and several physicians. What kind of persons are they?" The Bishop also expresses a desire to learn "more particulars respecting Mr. Hatchard's share in exciting the movement generally." So closed the year 1848. Meanwhile, the memorial to the Primate had been taken to Lambeth and presented by a local deputation, and the Bishop writing to Prynne concerning it on January 1, 1849, takes the opportunity of expressing the earnest hope "that God may bless you during the year which has just opened upon us, with every blessing on yourself and on your ministry."

From a long and valuable summary of the whole position locally that appeared in the *West of England Conservative*, a Plymouth paper, of January 3, 1849, several interesting points appear. After speaking of the urgent and general need that existed for Church discipline, it observes:—

"We believe that for the last fifty years and upwards, in no part of the kingdom has this laxity of salutary discipline prevailed to a greater extent than in the diocese of Exeter;¹ every clergyman seems to have assumed the right to conduct the services of his church or chapel

¹ In 1831, 280 incumbents of the Diocese of Exeter were non-resident, while Confirmation services were seldom held at the principal churches in Cornwall and Devon until something like 1000 candidates could be brought together from the surrounding parishes.

according to his own judgment or fancy, and until lately has been permitted to do so without check or control. It is to the Right Reverend Prelate who now presides over the diocese that we are indebted for the attempt to remedy the manifold evils resulting from the loose and disjointed system which has so long and so mischievously prevailed. The task, as may be readily imagined, was one of no ordinary difficulty, and the effort to accomplish it required the exercise of great decision of character and sound experience and judgment. Possessed of these mental requisites, his lordship has done much to restore the discipline of his clergy, and to increase their usefulness. In our own neighbourhood his lordship's exertions have already been productive of great good, and the prospective alleviation of the spiritual destitution that abounds in and around these towns should gladden the heart of every Christian. But these reforms in the discipline of the Church have called forth the ire of those who preferred the free and easy system of innovation that has been permitted so long to prevail; the dissenters, also, the congregations of whose chapels have dwindled into insignificance since the district churches have been opened and the gospel preached to the poor 'without money and without price,' have taken alarm; and loud, bitter, and violent have been the denunciations of wrath against the Bishop for every error in judgment or practice, real or imaginary, committed by the ten clergymen attached to the seven districts."

The writer goes on to outline the occurrences at St. Peter's during Mr. Prynne's incumbency, and meets with considerable force a few of the more glaring misstatements which had been enshrined in the memorial to the Primate already mentioned.

That the young priest in these, the first trying days of his incumbency, had the advantage of Dr. Pusey's wise and moderate counsel will be seen from the following letter, written about this time :—

“ 35, Grosvenor Square, 2nd Monday in Advent.

“I was very sorry to see the worry to which you have been exposed. I hope it is now come to an end. These scenes do stir up so many bad passions, and so set people against the truth. Certainly one should be glad that greater reverence could be restored; but I have long felt that we must first win the hearts of the people, and then the fruits of reverence will show themselves. To begin with outward things seems like gathering flowers and putting them in the earth to grow. If we win their hearts, all the rest would follow. I have never had the responsibility of a parish, but while I could not but feel sympathy with those who held themselves bound by every rubric, I could not but think myself that since the Church of England had virtually let them go into disuse, we were bound to use wisdom in restoring them, so as not, in restoring them, to risk losing what is of far more moment, the hearts of the people. We have high authority for avoiding even words which may give offence: and for myself, I avoid using technical language

and try to teach truth in as acceptable a form as I can. People shut their ears and their hearts against the truth in one form, which they will receive patiently in another. It is quite amazing how much truth even the prejudiced will receive, so long as they do not meet with the terms which they have been accustomed to object to. And so they get leavened they know not how; and their old narrow belief falls off like the serpent's old skin, when it outgrows it.

"I am very glad to see that you acted on the advice of the old men to Rehoboam. One could not but see, amid all that prejudice against P—ism, that there was a good deal of real attachment to the Church. And, after all, the dislike of innovation is a good principle: for there ought not to be innovation in matters of religion. At Devonport, too, where they have been so long neglected, they require the more patience. Were I at Devonport I would not edge in any outward changes, as though I were waiting for further opportunities, but go on earnestly preaching, visiting, teaching, be forward in every work of mercy, enlist people's sympathies for the poor, show them that we have large common ground, and that the characteristics of this formidable -ism are deeper love for God, and of man for His sake.

"I think it is of great moment that we should not foster the impression that this great battle is about things external. They think themselves forthwith more spiritual than their teachers, whereas the very thing which we wish to teach

them is deeper reverence and awe of God, deeper sense of their own responsibility, deeper knowledge of God's gifts in the gospel, more frequent communion with Him, conformity to Him, etc.

"When they have learnt this in some degree, there will be no more battles about surplices. There will be a deeper strife, but it will be with the world.

"You will not mind my thus speaking, but it is a common cause, both in that my own name is so blended with yours, and, much more, for the sake of the cause itself.

"God be with you always."

CHAPTER IV

The cholera at Plymouth (1849)—The work of Miss Sellon and her Sisters—Horrors of the visitation—The Bishop's sympathy—Institution of the Daily Eucharist at St. Peter's (1849)—The Rev. G. H. Hetling on the work of the Devonport Society.

THE Popish practices at Eldad and the Tractarian sympathies of Dr. Philpotts were, however, soon forgotten by Plymouth people in their consternation at the terrible epidemic of cholera which broke out in their midst during the summer of 1849. The first case was discovered on board an emigrant ship in the port early in June, and rapidly this dreaded scourge spread through the insanitary and over-crowded slums of the Three Towns, raging with special severity in the densely populated quarters with which St. Peter's district abounded. Shortly before the outbreak, owing to a grant from the Additional Curates' Society, Prynne had been able to secure the assistance of a fellow-worker, the Rev. G. H. Hetling, who was also a medical man, and his services were invaluable at such a juncture. Noble assistance was also rendered by Miss Sellon's Sisters of the Society of the Holy Trinity, which infant community was at work in Devonport, having been established in the neighbourhood early in the previous year. The Sisters were not working in St. Peter's parish at the time, but when the cholera broke out Prynne had a visit

from Miss Sellon one evening which he thus describes :
“ ‘I am come,’ she said, ‘to ask if you will accept the services of myself and Sisters to visit the sick and dying in your parish.’ A distrustful thought crossed me. Shall I bring these devoted ladies, I thought, from another parish, to such scenes and such dangers ? I must have hesitated and said some words to this effect. ‘You must not look upon us as mere ladies,’ said Miss Sellon, ‘but as Sisters of Mercy, and the proper place for Sisters of Mercy is amongst the sick and dying ; if you refuse our aid we must offer it elsewhere.’ ‘I will not refuse,’ I replied ; ‘come with me.’ And together we went, accompanied by Mr. Hetling, into the very worst of it. From that night their work began, and abated not until, through God’s mercy, the sickness itself did.”

No one can fully realize the horrors and anxieties of the cholera period. Night after night Prynne and his fellow-worker, Mr. Hetling, came back tired out with their exertions and the terrible scenes they daily witnessed amongst the sick and dying all around them. And here it was that the heroic bravery of Emily Prynne, the young wife, was perhaps seen to the best advantage. She who had been the admired belle of many balls, and whose earliest days were spent in a luxurious home, not only willingly faced the comparative poverty of her husband, but entered heart and soul into his work. Night and day she was ready and willing to help in attending the sick ; but it was more especially the children of the poorest that received her special care. No trouble seemed too great, no action was grudged, in the effort to comfort the little ones, many of whom were made orphans by

the cholera scourge. During this period she lived with the ever-present dread that any one of the household might be attacked by the dire disease. One day Prynne returned home feeling completely worn out, and with pains and sickness upon him, which even the doctor thought were the first stages of cholera, and ordered him, if possible, to get some moorland air on the following day. This he succeeded in doing, and Prynne said afterwards that one day seemed to give him new life for the strenuous work that was to follow.

On one occasion, in one of the small dirty courts leading out of Stonehouse Lane, he was visiting the sick, and, receiving no answer from the inmates of one house, he opened the door and went in, but only to find the whole house reeking with the most horrible stench, and in a state of indescribable disorder, with every single inmate dead—some lying on mattresses and some on the floor—and he and Mr. Hetling had to help in removing the dead from the house. This is only one of many instances of a similar character.

Writing many years afterwards, Prynne gave this touching and graphic account of a time which will long be remembered in Plymouth:—

“For three months we seemed to be living amongst the dying and the dead. A large wooden hospital for the whole of Plymouth was erected in our parish. We set up an altar in the largest ward, in order that everything might always be ready for communicating the dying. As the visitation reached its climax the deaths became very frequent and rapid. I was walking out one

morning at about nine o'clock. I met a woman hurrying along, and in answer to my inquiry, she said she was going to fetch the doctor for her husband, who had been seized with cholera. In the evening both she and her husband were in their coffins! The woman had died first.

"A day of humiliation was set apart. Our church was crowded with awe-struck, anxious worshippers, many of whom had not been to the church before.

"From a missionary point of view the cholera visitation was a great help to us. It showed the people that the Church cared for them. It helped us also in another way by bringing us sympathy and assistance from friends at a distance. The Bishop was specially sympathizing and liberal, as he ever was in helping those who were in distress. He liked to hear how we were getting on from time to time. His kind letters were a great help and encouragement to us. The following is his reply to a letter which I had sent him, giving an account of the way in which the day of humiliation was observed:—

" "September 21, 1849.

" "I heartily thank you for the very gratifying report which you have made to me of the devout manner in which the solemn service of Friday last was observed in your parish. May it please God to accept, bless, and strengthen those pious aspirations which He was pleased, by His Holy Spirit, to grant to so many of the people of your long-neglected town.

“‘I entirely approve your affording to your people the opportunity of offering their private prayers to God in His house at all hours, provided you can make due provision for securing that blessed place from profanation by the intrusion of unholy visitors.

“‘P.S.—I had almost forgotten the £10 which I promised to give to the Cholera Relief Fund, and £5 towards the maintenance of the little orphan whom you have received under your roof.’

“The little orphan here alluded to was one of our choir-boys, who, with his sister, was made an orphan by the death of both his parents in one day, as I have just recorded. I must not dwell upon details which a long life can never obliterate from my memory, and which it would take a volume fully to describe. Some of the scenes would rival in their tragic horror even those recorded in De Foe’s ‘History of the Plague of London.’

“I well remember on one occasion having been called to see a poor woman lying on a mattress on the floor in the agonies of cholera, and close to her confinement. It was in a low, overcrowded room. I had to step over one dead body to get to her. Another dead body had just been put into its thin coffin and was being lowered through the window into the court below. The staircase was too narrow to allow of the coffin being taken down that way. The screams of the people below, many of whom were Irish, in their terror and excitement, were most thrilling. Women would throw themselves on their knees

in the street and catch hold of my knees, entreating me to come to the aid of some stricken one.

"I cannot pass over this subject without speaking of the devoted and heroic labours of the Sisters of Mercy, then recently established by Miss Sellon, during this visitation, and of the invaluable assistance which they rendered us. They were a band of heroines in the army of God ; the thought of personal danger did not seem to enter their minds. They had a tent in the field near the hospital to harbour and feed the orphaned children. One morning my assistant-curate, Mr. Hetling, met one of the Sisters carrying something, which seemed heavy, folded up in her arms. He asked what it was. She had to admit that it was the body of a child that had just died of cholera, and that she was carrying it to the house where the ready-made coffins were kept. Another instance of self-sacrificing devotion of a still more striking character soon after came to my notice. A poor woman, struck down with cholera, had just left her infant child that she had been nursing. Her sufferings were aggravated by not having the accustomed relief. A Sister was kneeling by the side of the poor woman and doing the infant's part in relieving her, when the doctor came in and caught her in the act. 'Sister A——,' said he, 'you must promise me never to do that again.' The Lord seemed to have taken away all fear from those who were ministering to His suffering members.

"It was strange, but the only Sister who died of cholera was one who had not visited any cases ; the duties assigned her were confined to the house,

then at Stoke, about a mile from St. Peter's. I was sent for late one night to see her, and found her in the agonies of cholera, but perfectly conscious. I gave her Holy Communion, which she longed for, and in the morning she was dead. It was during the raging of the cholera that the Sisters asked to be allowed to receive Holy Communion daily to strengthen them for their daily work."

It is believed that this was the first restoration of the Daily Eucharist in the Church of England since the Reformation; and, save for a short interval, it has continued at St. Peter's during the more than fifty years that have since intervened. In days like the present, when in hundreds of parish churches and several of our cathedrals the Holy Eucharist is offered daily, it is of interest to recall the striking circumstances with which its restoration was associated, and the way in which it was connected with that other great revival of the religious life in the Anglican Communion.

Another eloquent and pathetic account of the distressing scenes which marked the frightful visitation of 1849, was written at Prynne's request by the Rev. G. H. Hetling and addressed by him to Dr. Philpotts in March, 1852, when bitter and unscrupulous attacks were being levelled against Miss Sellon and her work at St. Peter's. Mr. Hetling says:—

"MY LORD,

"In compliance with your expressed desire I subjoin to Mr. Prynne's statement of the

parochial work of the Sisterhood a few particulars of their exertions during the cholera. It were too long and too sad to retrace and describe all that occurred during that sad visitation. It has been my lot in life for one quarter of a century to have seen and borne an active part in very much of suffering, pain, and death. Formerly, in medical practice, I have seen the whole course of cholera in London, Paris, and Bristol, and lastly here in my office of deacon. I have beheld many acts of self-devotion to its sufferers and victims, yet never have I witnessed anything that surpassed, or even equalled, the self-abandonment and self-sacrifice of these humble Sisters. It was not merely the nursing and tending the sick, or the performance of something more than the ordinary duties of nurse; but it was the doing of these acts in that spirit of love and sympathy to the members of Him, Whose very body these poor sufferers were, which characterized their exertions.

“Stretched upon the bed, saturated with the sickness of this dreadful disease, their persons and dresses steeped in its poison, I have seen the sick and dying encompassed with their arms, the cramped limbs embraced and chafed, their heads reclining on their necks; now wiping with a gentle hand the fatal dampness from their sunk faces, now with affectionate entreaty pouring the medicine into their mouths, and then, in the intervals of repose, with lips close to their half-dull ears, whispering some kind words of love, hope of pardon for past sin, or repeating a short

prayer or sentence of the Litany; taking their hasty necessary meal from the common stock in the centre of the room, or often by the bedside, often leaving it unfinished to perform some menial act. And all this, too, amidst the gloom of that long array of shrivelled, collapsed, and leaden forms and faces, behind whose outward shroud Death was riding triumphant. They were awful times and solemn scenes. There was one redeeming feature—there was a halo of sanctity thrown around the persons of these calm Sisters which inspired hope and even confidence, and which, more than all, checked and repressed that irreverence and untimely merriment and pleasantries too common in the wards of a hospital. That hospital was a sacred place. The medical gentlemen, who indeed right nobly exercised their high profession, often expressed the security in which they left the nurses under their direction.

“With this ‘Mother in Israel,’ as she (Miss Sellon) is styled in scorn, and with some of her little band, did I, the first night they began their labours in our parish, visit most of the houses where the visitation was most raging; with her have I literally, in one house, where nine of one family were swept away, stepped over the yet unclosed coffin of the dead, moved aside on the floor the miserable straw bed, where life was sinking fast, to reach the almost forgotten child. . . . Night after night, and half through the night, have I known her remain in the hospital, or in these crowded rooms, with but fragile health herself,

and then has she gone to Devonport for the same work.

“One young lady in our parish had just lost two brothers; her two sisters were taken ill; her father and brother were engaged in removing them, and in attending others of the family sick; they were all worn out with toil. A note was sent in haste to the Home. The poor lady was watched, nursed hour by hour by two Sisters, each in turn of twelve hours, and by God’s mercy she recovered. Let such a scene be realized—the dead brother in an adjoining room, not a soul in the house beside (for the servant had left in terror), the patient wandering in fever after the cold-stage; one lone Sister, with nothing but her little basket of cold refreshment and her book of devotions. True to her trust, she kept her long and silent watch. How pure and steady was her love, how sacred and hallowed her patience! . . .

“One poor girl was brought into the hospital from the workhouse, her whole face soiled and marred with the unmistakable stain of early and continued sin. It was a heavy tale I listened to from her husky lips. An unkind word at home, too hastily acted upon, a hurried journey to Plymouth, arrival at night without food or shelter; allured by proffered relief, wronged and betrayed, and flung back in scorn upon the wide streets—the too common fate. Poor bewildered thing! she was very penitent for *her* sin, very forgiving to *him* who had made the wreck; but I know not how it was, she could not, would not, hope for her pardon. I strove very hard with her to

assure her of peace, but it availed not ; her life was mouldering away beneath a blank despair of the future ; joy had forsaken her breast. I spoke to the Sister. Hour after hour, for nearly two days and a night, she scarcely left her side ; *her* gentle voice recalled to the poor ruined girl her earlier days of innocence and purity. Her shame soon vanished beneath the tender tones of that dear Sister. Could such, so pure as she, speak and yearn so tenderly over her defiled self ? Then there was One above Who would. From time to time, as I passed, I watched the progress of the light that was beaming upon her soul ; she sank calm and happy in the prospect of an undying world of bliss. Less than a Sister, I believe, could not have done this work.

“I could write very much more, but I wish to be simple in statement, and those who did these works would shrink from their exposure. I do not wish to imply that others shrank from duties, or that there are not many who earnestly and faithfully helped to relieve and minister to the general distress ; but what I do directly assert is, that there were some things done which a Sister of Mercy’s unselfish pity, untiring patience, and self-denial could alone achieve.”

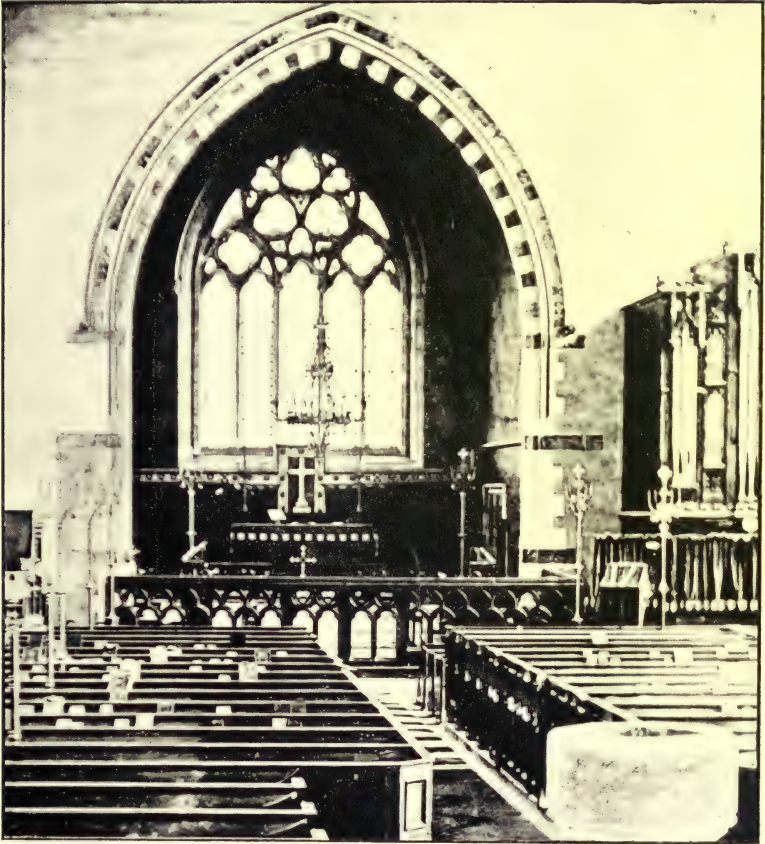
This letter is of interest not only for the graphic description it gives of a visitation, the severity of which, we may trust, could never be paralleled in these days of improved sanitary and hygienic conditions ; but it is also a faithful record of perhaps the very earliest Sisterhood work in a parish of the Anglican

Communion. The Community of St. Mary at Wantage was not founded until a little later, and that of St. John the Baptist, Clewer, in 1852. The cholera lasted about three months, gradually abating towards the close of the year 1849; but the good works begun by Miss Sellon at this time continued in the parish for many years, the Mission owing a great deal to the labours of this lady and her Sisters, one of whom still survives, Sister Mary Hilda, now Mother Superior of St. Mary's Abbey, West Malling. This lady's recollection of Prynne goes back to the beginning of his work in her native town of Plymouth, where, to use her own words, he was from the first "conspicuous for his saintliness of character and high sense of duty."

CHAPTER V

Alteration of the old church—Consecration by Bishop Philpotts—
The Bishop and Miss Sellon's Community—Foundation of a
permanent house—Dr. Pusey on the success of the Sisterhood—
Protestant agitation against the Community—Charges made by
the Rev. J. Spurrell—Prynne's reply.

DURING 1849 and 1850 the alterations necessary to make Eldad Chapel a more suitable building for the Church's services were completed, and on October 5th of the latter year it was consecrated by Dr. Philpotts. When, thirty years later, this building gave way to the present noble edifice, its chancel was retained; the sanctuary of to-day thus forms a link between old St. Peter's and the new, and is an actual part of that old building in which Prynne began his memorable ministry so many years ago. The date of its consecration, too, October 5th, is still observed as the dedication festival of St. Peter's. The alterations effected in the old chapel before its consecration, including the removal of unsightly galleries and hideous three-decker, provoked the disapproval of the remnants of Mr. Hawker's congregation and their sympathizers. Fanned by a hostile Press, the agitation broke out afresh. The journal already mentioned devoted many columns to a hostile description of "the events that transpired at St. Peter's on the day of its consecration," alleging that "with the Ritualists it was a grand field-day;" and it further



THE OLD CHURCH OF ST. PETER'S, PLYMOUTH.

[To face page 60.]

adds: "Amongst the clergy that were brought together was the Rev. Dr. Pusey, but his presence was kept a great secret, so that few persons knew that he was in the church at the time of the consecration." So inflamed was local opinion against the recognized leader of the detested movement, that the police authorities at Plymouth refused to be responsible for his safety if Dr. Pusey's identity was generally known. During his brief visit, therefore, he was referred to as "Dr. Grey," and at the consecration he simply occupied a place among the congregation. Some explanation of this incident may be found when we remember that the autumn of 1850 was a moment of intense uneasiness and distrust throughout England. On September 24, 1850, Pius IX. issued his Bull, "*Ad perpetuam rei memoriam*," constituting England an ecclesiastical province of the Roman Catholic Communion, with an archbishop and twelve suffragans. This "Papal aggression," coupled with the secessions to Rome which were constantly occurring, roused the public mind to a fever of excitement, and made even cool-headed people almost fanatical. "The public indignation was fed by very varying materials; besides appeals to the memories of the fires of Smithfield, of the massacre of St. Bartholomew, and of the Gunpowder Plot, it was stimulated by incitements to popular prejudice against the Tractarians. The Tractarians were 'down,' and were 'fair game' for any public man desiring to make political capital out of religious prejudices. . . . That Pusey should bear the brunt of so much of this outbreak of popular feeling as was directed against the Oxford party was inevitable. . . . Wherever he went, as he told

Keble, he had evidence of the feelings with which he was regarded."¹ In Plymouth, moreover, local Protestantism was specially aroused and excited by the creation, in 1850, of a Roman Catholic See in that town, and the enthronement with much pomp of a bishop of that communion.

The meeting of two such men as Dr. Pusey and Bishop Philpotts at this moment was undoubtedly fraught with considerable importance. Dr. Philpotts, the "noble but solitary exception" to his timid brethren of the episcopate, did his best to encourage and defend one whom he recognized as loyally working for the Church of England; withdrew the restraint he had imposed on Pusey as to preaching in his diocese; and pressed him to come to his house freely. The courage of such a line of action on the part of the Bishop needs no comment.

The consecration service, in spite of threats, passed off without any unpleasant incidents, Prebendary Oxenham preaching from the words, "Violence shall no more be heard in thy land, wasting nor destruction within thy borders, but thou shalt call thy walls salvation and thy gates praise" (Isa. lx. 18). Among the fifty clergy who supported the Vicar of St. Peter's by their presence on this occasion was that sturdy champion of the Tractarian movement in the west, Archdeacon Denison, who just then was strenuously resisting "the schismatical act of the Church of Rome," to which reference has been made, "standing fast" on the doctrine of Holy Baptism, and conducting a vigorous public and private correspondence with his opponents.

¹ Liddon's "Life of Pusey," vol. iii. p. 292.

Directly after the consecration of St. Peter's Church, Bishop Philpotts laid the foundation-stone of a new house for Miss Sellon's community, thus giving the stamp of his episcopal approval to that revival of the religious life in our midst, which in those early days provoked the most unreasoning and violent hostility of the "man in the street." On March 26, 1845, this movement, which was destined to exercise such tremendous results on the life of the Church in England, was inaugurated at Park Village West, Regent's Park, London, where a Sisterhood was established under Dr. Pusey's guidance. Three years later a similar enterprise was begun at Devonport by Miss Sellon. This lady, the daughter of Commander Sellon, R.N., was on the point of leaving her home in Devonshire and going abroad for her health, when she saw the Bishop of Exeter's urgent appeal of New Year's Day, 1848, for help to relieve the spiritual and moral destitution of the Three Towns. The necessity of increased provision for teaching the children of this great seaport formed a strong point in the Bishop's appeal, and Miss Sellon, with her father's consent, determined to offer herself for such work. This lady had already visited the Sisterhood at Regent's Park, and learnt something of the Religious life there. Dr. Pusey, with whom Miss Sellon was acquainted, sent her with a letter of introduction to Mr. Kilpack, the first incumbent of St. James's, Devonport, one of the new districts created under the Peel Act of 1843. Educational work, begun here by Miss Sellon and a friend, soon developed into something larger and deeper, as was inevitable in a district devoid of Church or other means of

organization, where the clergy could scarcely touch the spiritual needs of the five thousand souls committed to their care. When Miss Sellon had been at work in this district less than a year, Pusey, writing after a visit to this place, says: "The works of mercy opened at Devonport . . . embrace the whole range of which our Blessed Lord speaks relatively to the day of judgment." This was in January, 1849, when the manifest success of the work called for organization and co-operation on a very definite religious basis.

The Bishop of Exeter came to Devonport at this time for a Confirmation, and, after examining the work, sanctioned the establishment of the Sisterhood—which was generally known as the Devonport Society—and became its official visitor. Pusey, though he had with much wisdom discouraged the multiplication of small local Sisterhoods, was deeply impressed and greatly encouraged by the success which had attended Miss Sellon's work at Devonport :

"One can only say again and again, what one has said often these fifteen years, 'This is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes.' It is a common saying, 'Morice Town in November is quite different from Morice Town in April.' The same bad words are not heard in the streets; the very value of houses is increased, because they are more respectable. . . . It does make one's eyes fill with tears of thankfulness to think how good and loving God has been in this great work of love for their souls, and how many besides may yet be rescued out of this wasting

mass. I cannot think or speak of it without tears coming to my eyes."¹

In 1849, on the outbreak of the cholera epidemic, Miss Sellon, as we have already related, offered the services of herself and the Sisters to Mr. Prynne, by whom they were accepted.² Thus the work of the Devonport Society began at St. Peter's. For the first year or so the community rented several houses in Wyndham Square, close to the church, where they carried on their great work for the salvation of souls with every sign of blessing. Eventually a field near St. Peter's, in which a temporary hospital had been erected during the cholera, was purchased by the community, and here the foundation-stone of a permanent house was laid by the Bishop immediately after the consecration of the church. The community house was designed by Mr. Butterfield, and now forms a stately pile of buildings on the border of Plymouth and Devonport. It is generally called "The Abbey," and is the property of the Society of the Holy Trinity, generally known as the Ascot Sisterhood, which community is the survival of the Devonport Society. The ceremony of laying the foundation-stone of the community house came in for much hostile attention from the local Press, whose rude and vulgar references to the good Sisters indicated a complete forgetfulness of their noble and self-denying work during the time of Plymouth's visitation.

¹ Liddon's "Life of Pusey," vol. iii. p. 195.

² At Miss Sellon's urgent request several Sisters from the Park Village Community also went down to Plymouth and assisted during the cholera visitation.

Prynne's connexion with Miss Sellon's community, and his identification with them as priest of the parish in which the work of the Society chiefly lay, brought him more prominently than ever before public notice, and gave his Protestant opponents occasion for renewed persecution. Papal aggression had for a time occupied the attention of the Vicar of St. Andrew's and his coadjutors of "the British Society for the Promotion of the Principles of the Reformation." Already (early in 1849), at the instigation of the gentleman named, the Sisters had been charged with the horrible offences of saying "lauds" in their oratory; calling Fridays and Wednesdays "festival days" (!) and doing no work on them; wearing crosses; calling Dr. Pusey "Father," and permitting him to administer "the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper every day in the chapel when he was at the Home, and once in a small dormitory where a Sister was ill." These charges, and others like unto them, the Bishop had gravely inquired into at Devonport, declaring in the result that "Miss Sellon might leave that room with the gratitude and approbation of all those whose good opinion she would value." Thus defeated, but not silenced, these doughty champions of Protestantism only awaited some pretext for a new and more bitter attack. This they found in a pamphlet put forth in 1852 by the Rev. James Spurrell, M.A., Vicar of Great Shelford, Cambridgeshire, which purported to be "an exposure of the Constitution, Rules, Religious Views, and practical working" of the Devonport Society, "obtained through a 'Sister,' who has recently seceded." Considering the inflamed state of public feeling at the time of its publication, and

the avidity with which anything prejudicial to the Tractarian movement and its followers was seized upon, it is not surprising to find that this scurrilous pamphlet had a tremendous circulation, and that the "disclosures" it purported to make aroused the utmost excitement. The pamphlet, written by Mr. Spurrell, "from a sense of duty to the Master, whose servant he is," was worthy of high place in the annals of Protestant sensational literature. In its pages, among other serious charges brought against Miss Sellon, was that of having in the oratory of the chapel "a paper inscribed with the names of persons who desired the prayers of the Sisterhood." "What," asked the reverend writer, "would the excellent Hall, sometime Bishop of Exeter, say to all this, if he could pay a visit to his former diocese?" Be this as it may, the specific charges contained in the work, and in another of similar character by a local clergyman, the Rev. H. Seymour, were sufficiently serious to draw forth an indignant denial from the accused lady's father, Commander Sellon, R.N., who in blunt and sailor-like fashion easily demolished "the barefaced and wicked lies" that had been circulated about his daughter by these priests of the Church.

His intimate association with the Devonport Society, and the general feeling of hostility prevalent against him in the Three Towns, rendered it impossible that the Vicar of St. Peter's should not speedily be placed in the same pillory as Miss Sellon. In an address elicited by the issue of a second edition of Mr. Spurrell's pamphlet, wherein Mr. Prynne was attacked by name, and in a letter to the Rev. Hobart Seymour, who had levelled the most serious charges

against him in connexion with his chaplaincy of the community, the Vicar of St. Peter's thus made clear his own position :—

“God knows I am no Jesuit—no Papist at heart. I do not want to reintroduce the Romish errors which the Church of England has, I think, on sufficient grounds condemned. I desire, by God's grace, to spend and be spent for the Church of England, to live and die in her communion; but it must be for the real Church of England—for the Church of England in her entirety, as she appears in her Book of Common Prayer, and not as she is represented by those who desire to alter and mutilate that book, and who would fain blot out every Catholic and primitive feature it contains, by those who deny the grace of her sacraments, speak slightly of the Apostolical succession of her ministry, and utterly neglect the observance of those holy days which she has ordained, as well as the offering up of her daily morning and evening prayers; a duty which she has so expressly laid upon every priest and deacon. Might we not justly reply to those ministers of the Church who thus accuse us (Tractarians as they call us) of unfaithfulness, ‘Cast out first the beam out of thine own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to pull out the mote that is in thy brother's eye’?”

The writer then goes on to justify, in the clearest terms, the Church's Sacrament of Penance, against which, it is plain to see, the whole bitterness and

force of this attack was in reality directed. To his own words on this doctrine he adds a catena of authorities, many of which he quotes from Prebendary Gresley's little book on "The Ordinance of Confession." Bishop Philpotts, in his Charge of the year 1851, had laid down the Church's teaching in regard to confession and absolution with courage and clearness, affirming that "ministers who in these days receive the confession of penitents and pronounce absolution thereupon, act in full accordance, not only with the Church's law, but also with the constant practice of the most faithful of its rulers and teachers." Utterances like these, however, only served to deepen the fury of Protestant fanatics, the result of whose wrath speedily focussed in allegations of the most serious sort against the Vicar of St. Peter's regarding his treatment of penitents.

CHAPTER VI

Prynne and the Sacrament of Penance—Complaint to the Bishop—
Serious allegations against Prynne—Prynne's statement to the
Bishop—Legal action recommended—Disastrous result of an
earlier action for libel—The Bishop's enquiry at Plymouth (1852)
—Letter from J. D. Chambers—Dr. Pusey on the enquiry—
Complete exoneration of Prynne.

EVEN after this lapse of time, and when all the principal agitators have passed away, it is difficult to speak with restraint of the manifestly deliberate attempt on the part of certain of his clerical brethren to ruin the character and wreck the spiritual work of a devoted and self-denying priest, whose cause of offence was the practice of hearing confessions. It was no new practice on Prynne's part, for his diary witnesses that he was in the habit of hearing confessions during his curacy at Clifton. But the matter attracted the greater notice at Plymouth, in consequence of allegations that had been made with regard to the compulsion exercised on the orphans of Miss Sellon's home to avail themselves of this privilege. Prynne, too, had been particularly attacked on account of certain penances which he was accused of having inflicted upon one of the Sisters, and which Dr. Pusey took the entire responsibility of having recommended, as we gather from private correspondence that passed between them on the subject, and to which it is unnecessary to refer further.

In the summer of 1852 the wrath of the local Protestants was violently excited by the announcement that the Bishop intended to hold a Confirmation at St. Peter's in the succeeding autumn. Strenuous efforts were made to induce him to alter his determination. The walls of the town were placarded with large bills, calling upon parents to refrain from taking their children to the Confirmation, and on August 7, 1852, the Rev. J. Hatchard, Vicar of St. Andrew's, Plymouth, addressed the Bishop as follows :—

“MY LORD,

“Whilst extremely unwilling to trespass upon your time, I feel it a duty to inform your Lordship that the feeling excited by your decision of holding the Confirmation at St. Peter's Church is of the most painful character and pervading all classes of society.

“Should you persevere in that intention, I am assured that not only will the numbers presented for Confirmation be far below the usual attendance, but the service itself be greatly lowered in the estimation of the inhabitants of the Three Towns.

“The notice given has called forth the loudest expressions of disapprobation ; the mass of the people regarding it in the light of the Bishop of the diocese doing his utmost to uphold the system carried out in that church, and as evincing a resolution to give offence to the Protestant feeling of the neighbourhood.

“Trusting that your Lordship will see fit to recall the notice, etc., etc.,

“JOHN HATCHARD.”

In reply to this the Bishop inquired what "the system carried out in that Church" might be to which Mr. Hatchard objected, at the same time observing that he personally knew of no reason why St. Peter's, which he had selected on grounds of convenience owing to its central position in the Three Towns, should not be the scene of the intended Confirmation. A long correspondence ensued between the Bishop on the one part and Prynne and his traducers on the other. The charges at first were vague and general. In reply to the Bishop's urgent inquiry, Mr. Hatchard formulated them as follows :—

"1st. The Confessional is within the Church.

"2nd. The Confession is carried on secretly, not as in Roman Catholic churches, openly, where the parties may be seen by the passers-by.

"3rd. That (at least in the case of the girls belonging to the Orphans' Home) it is periodically and compulsorily carried on.

"4th. That this compulsion and periodical system is enforced upon very young children."

There were, however, other more specific charges in the background, dealing with statements obtained from certain girls of the Orphans' Home, to which reference is made in the following letter from Prynne to the Bishop, in which his part of the case is set forth. It is dated August 12, 1852 :—

"I feel it right to transmit to your Lordship a correspondence which has taken place between Mr. Hatchard and myself, in order to show your

Lordship the unscrupulous means which are being used to oppose your Lordship's authority and to injure me. The circumstance of your Lordship having fixed on St. Peter's Church for holding the Confirmation this year appears to have kindled into fresh activity that bitter party spirit which has for so long a time actuated Mr. Hatchard and those who act with him. At a committee meeting of the Plymouth Orphan Asylum held yesterday, a resolution was proposed by some one, and seconded by Mr. Hadow, that none of the children should be taken to St. Peter's Church for Confirmation. This resolution was supported by Mr. Hatchard, Mr. Greaves, and Mr. Poslethwaite, as well as Mr. Hadow, and carried by a majority of six. In order to have some more definite pretext to justify such a course, they have, in addition to the vague scandals which they had before diligently circulated, now suborned a young girl out of the Sisters' school—the same girl whom they used on a former occasion, previous to the Inquiry at Devonport in 1848—and have induced her by some means or other to make a statement which conveys a most false impression of my system. The accusation which Mr. Hatchard and his party are circulating against me, and on which they are trying to excite popular violence, is that I have suggested evil to young persons of which they had previously been ignorant. This charge, could it be substantiated, would indeed show me guilty of grave indiscretion, but knowing what my practice has been, I say it is most untrue.

“With regard to the girl’s statement I cannot, of course, without violating the secrecy of the confessional, say more than that it is calculated to produce a grossly false impression, but with regard to the subject of putting questions to those who come for confession, I beg to say that I never ask questions except where it seems to be necessary to do so in order to assist the person to make a full and perfect confession. Those who are in the habit of receiving confessions know that persons often have deep and painful sins to confess which they have a difficulty or a delicacy in expressing, and if the confessor were not to help such persons by kind and judicious questions they would be greatly disappointed, and would go away only half relieved, and we could not in that case honestly grant them absolution ‘from all their sins.’

“There is another reason why questions are sometimes necessary. A confessor will often see that persons have no idea how often and how gravely they have offended till he has brought it home to them by searching questions. On these grounds I conceive that to receive confessions without asking questions would in the majority of cases be a miserable mockery, producing nothing but disappointment or deception in the mind of the penitent. But in receiving confessions I beg to assure your Lordship that I have ever acted on what must always be considered a fundamental rule, viz. to use great care not to suggest evil by injudicious questions. In

a matter, however, which depends so much on individual judgment and discretion, and for which the clergy of the Church of England have few advantages either of practice or education, I may possibly have sometimes erred, though I trust I have always used the utmost caution and have had solely in view the good and purification of the soul before me. I do trust that this part of my ministry has been blessed to those who have used it. Indeed, my Lord, when I see before my eyes what the practice of confession has been under God the means of effecting ; when I see some, who but a short time since were living in open and notorious sin, now evidently striving to lead a godly and Christian life—regular in prayer, public and private, and frequent communicants—I cannot but think it little less than a device of Satan to try and raise a popular outcry against it, seeing as he does how many victims it is rescuing from his dominion. I am fully alive to the great responsibility which the exercise of this part of our ministerial duty involves, but after accepting cure of souls, I believe it would be a dereliction of duty in me to refuse any one who thus sought my aid. I do look for wisdom and guidance from above—in personal prayer—to aid me in this arduous office, and I believe we have a special title to trust that it will be conveyed to us through the preventing and abiding grace of Holy Orders.

“It is with much pain that I have felt obliged to speak of Mr. Hatchard and his party as I have,

but I see no alternative. Ever since your Lordship was pleased to assign me this sphere of duty, I have experienced from them nothing but the most rancorous and unscrupulous opposition. I established Church schools, and immediately Mr. Hatchard, Mr. Hadow, and the Dissenters started an opposition school in the immediate neighbourhood, wherein it was laid down as one of their laws that the Church Catechism should not be taught. Mr. Hatchard had never established any school in this wretched neighbourhood whilst it was part of his own parish, but only after mine was set on foot. I mention this to show that the present move they have now made is only one of a series of long-continued opposition. That they should carry their feelings so far as to endeavour to thwart your Lordship's purpose of holding a Confirmation at St. Peter's, or any church your Lordship thinks fit to assign, is, indeed, a lamentable proof of the length to which they will go, but I think this sort of opposition will defeat its own object even with many of those who might otherwise agree with them."

The importance of the subject justifies the insertion of this long and characteristic letter—one of very few that have been preserved. At the present day, when the revival of the Sacrament of Penance in the English Communion has become a regular and recognized part of the work in so many parishes, such a defence may seem unnecessary. At that time, however, the document must have been to the Bishop a

valuable testimony of the sincerity and earnestness of Prynne's work, and a revelation of his courage and perseverance in the midst of so much misunderstanding and prejudice. To those of us who were privileged to know him in his later years, and to reverence his deep piety and saintliness of character, it seems inconceivable that such odious charges as were made by these ministers of the gospel, and the wretched dupes they suborned to accuse him, could have been believed for a moment. In all the painful correspondence that ensued there is nothing to indicate that Dr. Philpotts ever seriously believed what was reported to him. But with characteristic wisdom he felt it to be his duty to take cognizance of the matter, and, therefore, postponed the Confirmation until October. In the mean time fresh evidence against Prynne had been manufactured, and the Rev. T. C. Childs, incumbent of St. Mary's, Devonport, and the Rev. W. H. Nantes, of St. George's, Stonehouse, were added to the list of his accusers. With regard to the charges made by the former the Bishop wrote on August 15th :—

“I enclose a statement sent to me by Rev. T. C. Childs.

“While I fully assent to its being your duty to refuse to disclose what was said to you in confession, I nevertheless do not think that it is your duty to refuse to state that you did not ask special questions, falsely ascribed to you, or anything of the kind.

“I assent to the necessity of questions being put arising out of matters confessed, but I

deprecate as most corrupting the practice of proposing questions as to particulars.

"In the enclosed paper it is stated that, according to the rules of the Sisters of Mercy, the young woman desiring to receive the Holy Communion was *required* previously to confess to you.

"Is this true ?

"Again, it is said that she was taken into the church, and, the doors being locked, was conducted by you into the *Confessional*, a room in the church known by that name.

"Is this true ?"

To this Prynne at once replied in the following terms :—

"Your Lordship will ere this have received a letter from me on the subject of the statement sent to your Lordship by the Rev. T. C. Childs.

"From that letter your Lordship will have learnt the utter falsehood of the whole statement, inasmuch as I never received such a person for confession at all. I beg to assure your Lordship that I never put any such questions to any one in my life as are suggested in the statement, or anything like such questions.

"I should deem it as corrupting to do so, as I am sure your Lordship would. I put questions under the circumstances which I have already stated to your Lordship, viz. in order to assist persons to make a complete confession of sins which they have upon their conscience and desire

to confess but have a difficulty in doing, or in order sometimes, where they seem ignorant, to bring more fully home to their consciences the degree of their guilt. It is not my custom to question persons as to sins which are unconnected with those they have confessed or which seem to lie upon their consciences. . . .

"I beg distinctly to assure your Lordship that it is not true that any one connected with the Sisters of Mercy is required to confess previous to going to the Holy Communion.

"I have no room in St. Peter's Church known by the name of the Confessional.

"I have spoken to Sister C—— about the girl E. H——. I find it was the same I once spoke to about Confirmation and Holy Communion. She was dismissed for bad conduct, and it has since been discovered that she was guilty of stealing several things when she left."

The Bishop was a little doubtful how to deal with the matter. He advised Prynne at first to prosecute the girls for slander; but he soon abandoned this idea, realizing that a conviction was hardly possible at the hands of a Plymouth jury in the then excited and prejudiced state of the public mind. Prynne, moreover, reminded the Bishop that he had already suffered the loss of all his worldly goods in seeking legal redress against a local journalist named Latimer, who had grossly libelled him in the paper he edited and controlled. With this experience fresh in his mind, Prynne was not minded to risk a similar disastrous result.

The action alluded to, and the painful events leading up to it, formed one of the greatest trials of Prynne's life, and may, perhaps, be briefly recorded at this point. The libellous accusations in Latimer's paper were of so outrageous and gross a nature that not only was it felt by the Bishop of Exeter and other clergy that such statements could not be left unchallenged without serious damage to the cause, but Prynne was also pressed by his own and his wife's relations to take legal action to defend himself, and to prevent, if possible, such libels from being spread broadcast.

Although Prynne, with his naturally loving and sensitive nature, felt more keenly than any this vindictive vilification of his character and work, he refrained for a long time on principle from taking legal action. But when he found that his reticence to take action against his libellous accusers was misunderstood even by his own and his wife's family, who felt it to be a point of honour to refute the scandalous things published—and when both clergy and laity advised that action should be taken for the good of the cause, and to prevent their repetition,—Prynne sought the advice of his Bishop, Dr. Pusey, and other tried friends, and it was only upon this unanimous advice that he at last agreed to take action. While Prynne would have welcomed a just and impartial investigation, under the existing condition of things, and in the excited state of public opinion, he felt doubtful as to the wisdom of seeking justice in the ordinary court of law. Eventually, however, and with much reluctance, he sued Latimer on the charge of libel, the action being heard at Exeter.

In describing this early trial many years later, Prynne said :—

“It was a strange scene. The court was crowded; but in that crowd I could only see some half a dozen friendly faces. The large majority seemed to look upon me with dislike and suspicion. The jury, as I afterwards learned, was composed almost entirely of Dissenters. The case did not last long, but my friends seemed satisfied that the evidence had entirely proved the libellous nature of the statements against me, and the judge's summing up confirmed this view. Indeed, when the jury left the room, the judge, much to my astonishment, shook hands with me, and congratulated me on my evidence and the course the action had taken. When, shortly afterwards, the jury returned with a verdict for the defendant, those present seemed too surprised to utter a sound, but in a few seconds the majority commenced to cheer and clap their hands. The judge seemed very indignant, and at once ordered silence.”

This, undoubtedly, was one of the greatest trials of Prynne's life. At the time it seemed to mean so much more than, under God's guidance, it really did—not only loss of prestige, loss of friends, and family estrangement, but loss of all worldly possessions. At first the blow seemed to be overwhelming. But, on the other hand, the injustice of the whole proceeding was too apparent, with the result that not only the sincerity of old friends was proved, but

many new friends were made. It was here evident, as in every crisis of Prynne's married life, what a comfort and blessing a well-chosen helpmate may be. Never was there a woman who more bravely faced her husband's difficulties and anxieties than Emily Prynne; she willingly shared them without grumbling or complaint.

The costs of the action were heavy, and Prynne being quite unable to meet them, everything of value he had was sold, including the wedding presents of his young wife. Then there was a considerable amount of vindictiveness shown in the seizure of goods and during the sale. Not even the cradle in which her first-born son, Howard, was sleeping, was allowed to remain, and the young mother was temporarily obliged to use an old drawer, that was thought to be useless, as the cradle, until the child could be removed to the rooms prepared by Miss Sellon for the reception of Prynne and his family. The kindness and sympathy shown by friends far and near, was no small consolation at this time of personal sorrow and loss. Amongst the many kind actions, few were appreciated more than the delicate thought of several staunch supporters in buying up some of the articles most valued by Mrs. Prynne, and restoring them to her. The portrait illustrated in this volume is amongst those thus rescued and restored. When the original of this picture was put up for sale, one of Prynne's chief traducers got on the platform and shouted out, "Here is a picture of the culprit. Who'll give five shillings for it?" Major Wright, who was an enthusiastic Churchman and friend, gallantly stepped forward into the crowd and said, "I will, willingly,"



THE REV. G. R. PRYNNE.

(From an old Drawing, 1849.)

[To face page 82.]

and at once paid for the picture and brought it back under his arm to Wyndham Square. Such actions as these, and the kindness shown by Miss Sellon and her sister, did much to soothe and comfort Prynne in this trial, and in preventing this personal anxiety and loss from materially affecting his great life's work. At no time of his long life was Prynne's loving, forgiving nature more beautifully seen than in this trial. Never was he heard to utter a harsh word against his bitter opponent, even though the latter continued the attacks in his paper. Many years later, when Mr. Latimer lost one of his sons by accident, Prynne, meeting him in Plymouth streets, went up to him and expressed his deep sympathy with him in his sorrow. This simple act of kindness brought tears to the eyes of the sorrow-stricken father, and from henceforth no bitter things about Prynne appeared in his journal. This is typical of the way in which Prynne's love and gentleness overcame the bitter opposition with which he had to contend.

Resuming again the thread of our narrative, and reverting to the incidents of 1852, the Bishop, who was fully acquainted with all that has just been related, eventually decided to hold an enquiry into the matter himself—as he had previously done in Miss Sellon's case,—and fixed September 22nd for the date. A somewhat similar proceeding had taken place with reference to kindred charges brought against the clergy of St. Saviour's, Leeds, in 1850; but this had ended disastrously for the peace of that much-tried parish, owing to the want of sympathy and tact which the Bishop of Ripon displayed on that occasion. Prynne, fortunately in the safer and wiser hands of

Bishop Philpotts, welcomed the enquiry. Pusey was consulted by the Bishop and by Prynne as to the best procedure to be adopted and the statements to be investigated. Prynne also consulted J. D. Chambers, receiving from him valuable advice as to the legality of hearing confessions and the necessity of putting questions to the penitent. The following letter from Chambers to Coleridge, dated September 9th, refers more particularly to this subject :—

“MY DEAR COLERIDGE,

“I have seen the letters from the Bishop to Prynne which explain the whole matter of the inquiry. I write this to refer you to Gresley's little book on Confession (second edition) which contains many authorities which are well put, also to a sermon of Sanderson's before Cambridge University, which is usually printed separate. I have it bound up with an old edition of Nelson.

“As the Bishop is so uncertain and crotchety on these subjects, and I feel deeply about this very point, let me put a point or two before you which you very likely have anticipated.

“1. I would contend that confession to *man* is a *general Christian duty* as Sanderson urges, confession to *the Priest* being so only incidentally, simply because he is the best and most proper person to whom to make confession, having the power of absolution.

“2. That the Church of England left that general Christian duty *as it was*, which is proved by its being recommended and enjoined in certain cases, from which you may infer that it is to be

considered right and profitable in others—for if you are enjoined to have your dinner on one special day, you may gather that you may have it on others, although not of necessity.

“3. I understand that it is urged against Prynne that he *forced* these girls to confess. Now in the ‘Visitation of the Sick,’ the sick person is to be *moved* to confess, being then expectant of death. Surely, then, as all Christians ought to watch, and to expect death at every successive moment, *moving* to confession, if it be right then, must be right at all times in this life.

“4. But what is meant by confession being only *voluntary* in the Church of England? I apprehend that the true notion is simply this—that it is not to be considered as a *necessary condition* precedent to any spiritual privilege or ecclesiastical rite (such as Communion or Confirmation), but that its obligation as a Christian duty still remains, and the clergy are bound to *move* persons to confession in all cases, although they may not deny spiritual privileges to any person on account only of a refusal to confess.

“5. I am told one or more of these girls was an abandoned character. If so, surely Prynne when required by the Superior—for I suppose *she* could not question them—was bound to institute an examination into their conduct in order to discover whether those bad practices were either in conversation or behaviour repeated or remembered. For otherwise all the orphans might have been contaminated.

"In fact, if I have rightly apprehended the matter, Prynne only did that which he was bound to do in order to uphold the purity of the Institution.

"Yours ever most truly,

"J. D. CHAMBERS."

It was, no doubt, to this letter from the Chancellor of Salisbury that Pusey refers in the following letter to Prynne a few days later. It is one of several long communications which he wrote at this period, for he seems to have given the whole matter considerable attention, and to have been impressed with the general importance of the enquiry:—

"MY DEAR FRIEND,

"I wrote a long letter to the Bishop yesterday, urging that the inquiry should be private (*i.e.* that there should be no reporters) for the sake of the poor orphans, of public morality, of decency, of the other orphans, who would be supposed to be as bad as them, and of the Sisters themselves, who ought not to be mixed up with such stories. It is the very thing to set parents against Sisterhoods.

"I have this morning read J. D. C.'s last letter, which is very strong. It would be well to ask him whether the charge could by any means be brought under the Church Discipline Act? I should have doubted it. I should have thought it a case (if it had been as true as it is false) not contemplated. For although you are virtually on your trial, it is on the charge of wrongly

administering what is right, not for intentionally doing wrong. It would indeed have been a most grievous error of judgment, still the worst which could even be alleged would be that it is an error of judgment.

“I also urged on the Bishop the necessity of your having some one to cross-examine. I do not know much about this. I should have thought that a clergyman, who understood the subject, could ask questions perhaps as well as a professional person. At the same time, a cross-examination which fails, I suppose, damages a cause very much. I see that the Bishop thinks that a professional adviser would damage your cause. But the question is not about clearing you from statements seemingly true, but to detect a conspiracy, at least to show that the poor girls have been worked upon to speak what is untrue. But this requires legal acuteness as much as any other matter. Perhaps on this you had better consult Mr. —. I will gladly bear any expenses of the trial on your part. It is all our cause, besides personal regard and love for yourself.

“If this case cannot be brought under the Church Discipline Act, still there is no reason why all forms should not be used just as much as if it were. The whole inquiry is carried on at the will of the Bishop with your concurrence. There is nothing to hinder his carrying it on in one way as much as in the other, except that J. H. says that he cannot administer an oath, which J. D. C. says is not of much moment. Persons who will solemnly lie would probably

perjure themselves. So then we have but an added sin. But all evidence must be sifted in the same way, and so you must urge on the Bishop that if the inquiry is instituted at all, it should be instituted with every advantage to elicit truth which the law allows.

"I do not see, if it is an advantage, why you should not forward J. D. C.'s proposal. If J. D. C. is willing to plead before an extra-judicial tribunal, there can be no reason why it should not be permitted. The forms of law are only to secure truth. You and your accusers appeal to the Bishop as an arbiter. It is of importance that the matter should be settled. Your character suffers through these vague accusations. An inquiry is for your protection. There is no legal or ecclesiastical reason against your having the Bishop as an arbiter. But then whatever tends to elicit truth should be used, else the inquiry would be worse than useless. It would only stimulate falsehood. The cross-examination of witnesses by persons practised in it is only resorted to on the ground that falsehood is so best detected. Whatever good the employment of such helps has in other cases it would have in yours. I do not know who would be the best cross-examiner. But I would ask Mr. Ben's advice, telling him of the points to be brought out in any case, which he, as unaccustomed to this subject, would not know. Such questions as those which you showed me would be of great use to him. I trust that I left them behind at Plymouth.

"There is perhaps an inconsistency in direct pleading, like J. D. C., and a private examination; and this has hindered me from writing to the Bishop a supplemental letter which I had begun. But there can be no inconsistency in inquiring in any way which is most likely to elicit truth, and so I think that you should urge upon the Bishop that there should be the best cross-examiner which your case admits of."

The remainder of the letter deals with particulars of the allegations made against Prynne, and the best method of meeting them without violating the seal of confession.

The Bishop's desire, and that of all right-minded persons, was that the enquiry should be conducted *in camera*; but this, as might be expected, was by no means acceptable to Prynne's traducers, who addressed a strongly worded remonstrance to the Bishop against the "exclusion of the laity." Publicity was the very thing they sought; without it their object would be practically lost. Indeed, Mr. Hatchard and Mr. Childs threatened to withdraw from the case unless the public were admitted and reporters allowed to be present. The Bishop felt compelled to give way on this point, and proposed that six laymen should be chosen on either side—a compromise which the accusers reluctantly accepted, but of which Prynne did not avail himself, feeling to do so would be an admission on his part that he thought the matter of the enquiry a suitable one to be discussed before laymen, to which view he was utterly opposed.

The enquiry, which—if we may judge from the

large space allotted to it in the columns of the local press—had excited no little anticipation in Plymouth, was duly held on September 22nd, at the Royal Hotel. The Bishop was attended by his chaplains and the Archdeacon, and there was a large muster of local clergy. Prynne was represented by his curate, the Rev. F. Darling, who conducted the defence in a manner worthy of a professional advocate. This priest, who was Prynne's valued colleague during two trying and memorable years, 1851-53, still lives, residing in retirement near Tunbridge Wells. Defence, as a matter of fact, was unnecessary, for the case of the accusers broke down hopelessly at a very early moment, and the Bishop stopped the inquiry without calling upon Prynne for his reply, which he was prepared to read. Into the details of the evidence it is not necessary after this length of time to go. It is sufficient to say that the charges were of the flimsiest character. They were grounded on the written declarations of three young girls, of whom the first, on her examination before the Bishop, utterly destroyed her own credit; the second was distinctly contradicted upon all material points, not only by the solemn and reiterated assurance of Prynne himself, but by the concurrent testimony of several unimpeachable witnesses; while the third, having first deliberately retracted in the presence of a magistrate all that she had said to Prynne's prejudice, declined to come forward at all. Under these circumstances it is clear that the Bishop adopted the only possible course he could pursue. He had come there to investigate specific charges, and when he found those charges not supported by a single atom of testimony,

it was due to justice at least that he should close the enquiry with the verdict that he acquitted Prynne even of indiscretion in the matters alleged against him. The proceedings at the enquiry lasted five hours, and at the conclusion the Bishop summed up in every way favourable to Prynne, concluding with these weighty words: "With my hand upon my heart I exonerate Mr. Prynne from any blame in this matter, and I acquit him even of indiscretion, and I pray God that every clergyman in my diocese may do his duty as well as Mr. Prynne has done his."

After all that had gone before, it was only natural that the result of the Bishop's investigation should be awaited with the greatest anxiety by Mr. Prynne's friends, and by none more so than his devoted partner in life. Mrs. Prynne would often describe how intense her anxiety was during the hours she remained at home alone—how that time was mostly spent in prayer; and when at last her husband arrived, late in the evening, and she then heard how fully her prayers had been answered, she could no longer restrain her pent-up feelings, but could for a time only express her deep thankfulness in tears of joy.

The Bishop, after delivering his decision, announced that the Confirmation service already arranged would take place at St. Peter's Church that day four weeks. Whereupon Mr. Hatchard remarked, that "an immense amount of excitement had existed throughout the kingdom of the most serious character;" to which the Bishop rejoined that this being so only rendered an act of justice to Mr. Prynne the more necessary.

CHAPTER VII

The vindication of Confession—Opinion of the local press—Dr. Philpotts on Confession—Prynne's statement of his position—Congratulatory letters from Dr. Pusey, Dr. Neale, J. D. Chambers, and Rev. C. Gutch—Renewed agitation and further charges against Prynne—Confirmation and riot at St. Peter's—Newspaper comments—Result of the persecution—The Bishop's attitude.

THE result of the enquiry was not without good effect on the minds of the more reasonable. The *Western Luminary*, for example, a journal by no means in sympathy with Prynne's views, commented thus :—

“ We know something of the secret history of this case—of the inducements which were held out, and the threats which were employed, to bring about, in the case of one of these poor girls, her removal from the Orphans' Home—of the circumstances under which Miss Sellon was induced to take her back, and of the privations and contaminating influences to which she was left exposed by those who professed to be so anxious for the purity of her faith and the salvation of her soul. But we forbear to go into particulars ; we are content, for our part, that the matter should rest where it is ; and will only, in conclusion, express our earnest hope that gentlemen and clergymen will be induced by what has transpired in the course of this inquiry, to be

cautious how they lend a willing ear to slanderous attacks upon the character of a brother clergyman, taking the slanderers under their protection, and giving them the shelter of their roof."

The *West of England Conservative*, in a leader on the subject, put the matter even more forcibly :—

"It is seldom that a man's character comes out of an investigation so entirely, so palpably, and so unmistakably cleared from all blame, as did that of Mr. Prynne at the late inquiry. How seldom could the motives and actions of even the purest and most honourable, if subjected to a rigid examination, bear the motto which the Bishop so justly and so solemnly inscribed on Mr. Prynne's conduct, with respect to the charges brought against him, 'I acquit him even of indiscretion.' If we would only dispassionately review our own lives, could we fail to acknowledge that they contain many passages which, however innocent in themselves, would yet scarcely bear unscathed the harsh and criticising scrutiny of a censorious and uncharitable world? If an artful foe, with the cunning of malice, frames some simple and plausible falsehood, and obstinately persists in asserting it, how difficult it is to prove the negative. In the case of Mr. Prynne, fortunately the subject-matter of the charges was of so peculiar a nature that it was not impossible by means of a skilful examination to prove their absurdity and inconsistency—and

yet this proof was only at the moment available to those whose knowledge of the subject enabled them to detect and appreciate the inconsistencies which were exposed. The witness E. H. did indeed answer most glibly and readily, but unfortunately for her cause, she, no less than those who admired her promptitude, was unaware that the questions put to her were a skilfully arranged series of traps and pitfalls. It must have been edifying to his Lordship, and those acquainted with the subject of confession, to observe the unconscious alacrity with which she walked blindfold into each unsuspected snare. The questions put to her were devised so as to lead her to expose her total ignorance of the mode in which confession is conducted, and thus to prove that she, in fact, had never been to confession. Could any rational person suppose that Mr. Prynne receives confessions, and of such a nature, from persons who are all the while sitting? Did not his own letter to Sir C. Eardley say that confessions were made kneeling? Does any one believe that he really receives confessions with his academical cap on (in the course of cross-examination the girl had stated that Mr. Prynne had on 'a square cap' when he gave her absolution!), or that he pronounces absolution kneeling, with his back to the penitent, and that the form of absolution commences with the words, 'Reverend Father in God,' and amounts to a prayer for the 'health and success' of the person to whom it is granted? Is it reasonable to suppose that after the woman had warned him she

considered his questions improper, he should have continued to ask questions tenfold worse? Is it possible that a clergyman would proceed to give absolution to a person who had just told him she did not think confession to a priest of any use, and that she did not believe he had any power of forgiveness—not to mention that in this latter particular her verbal and written statements were diametrically opposed to one another? It must be needless, after all this, to point out that had the girl ever been to confession she could not have made such ridiculous blunders. If further assurance were needed, it was furnished in the complete denial of her statement so solemnly called for by the Bishop, and so solemnly made by Mr. Prynne. . . .

“In reviewing the inquiry itself, we cannot but think that most persons present must have been struck with the impartiality of the Bishop; indeed, to ourselves it appeared that this impartiality was strained so as to render his Lordship hardly fair to Mr. Prynne and his clerical advisers. We may mention, as an instance, that his Lordship had strongly advised Mr. Prynne not to employ the assistance of a lawyer. In deference to this advice, Mr. Prynne, as we are positively assured, had not even consulted, much less introduced to the inquiry, any legal adviser. It was not to be wondered, therefore, that Mr. Prynne’s clerical counsel should have remonstrated when they saw that the whole of the proceedings of the other party were prompted by a professional lawyer, and yet the Bishop



paid no attention to this remonstrance. We are informed that the Rev. F. Darling, who conducted the defence, had behind a large body of evidence which was calculated to bring the matter out in a yet more distinct and vivid light, but that he was deterred from producing it on account of the discouraging manner of the Bishop. For the sake of public opinion he would have wished to go on ; but, no doubt, when he saw that the Bishop was entirely satisfied by what had been elicited, he felt it his duty not to press the matter further."

Prynne had, as we have stated, prepared an elaborate written defence, in the compilation of which he had been guided by Pusey, and this he had intended reading at the enquiry. The document, which was afterwards published in the papers, dealt at length with the whole subject of confession, which had been only indirectly touched upon during the course of the enquiry, the Bishop contenting himself with a disproof of the allegations made concerning Prynne's manner of hearing confessions. The legality or advisability of the practice—as to which the Bishop's views were undecided and peculiar—was not discussed at the enquiry, but some correspondence which took place upon the publication of Prynne's defence in the Press throws light upon the Bishop's position. Dr. Philpotts took exception to Prynne's contention that it was for his accusers to show "that the Church of England does discourage this practice (confession) by some authoritative statement in some of her authorized documents." The

Church of England teaching, the Bishop maintained, did virtually discourage *the general habit* of confession.

“For such general habit” (the Bishop maintained) “would seem to show, either that the party adopting it did never honestly and earnestly strive to do all that he can for himself, or that, having once received private absolution, he is so unstable, so light-minded, so utterly incapable of all self-control, that after such absolution he is continually relapsing into sin—and sin of such malignity that he cannot of himself attain (by the ordinary grace of God) to due repentance. Surely we must believe that such cases, if there be any such, are very rare.

“I say, therefore, now, as I have more than once publicly said before, as well as privately told my candidates for holy orders, that the Church of England appears to me *to discourage confession as a general habit*.

“You state—at the end of your next paragraph but one—‘I have invited our people to have recourse to this ministration of our Lord’s most merciful authority, whenever the spiritual necessities of any of them shall need it, *in accordance with the advice contained in your Lordship’s pastoral letter of last year.*’

“When you thus referred, very correctly, to my advice, as your authority in one particular, I must express my regret that you did not, at the same time, give equal weight to the authority of that same pastoral letter, in the very passage

from which you were quoting, where it 'condemned the habit of going to confession as a part of the ordinary discipline of a Christian life.' I even stated in the same place 'that I had warned a clergyman who had himself incited a party to have recourse to confession before him, not being either of the two cases where it is prescribed in the Book of Common Prayer.' I had, I say, 'warned this clergyman to abstain from a course which seems ill-accordant with the teaching and mind of our Church.' In conclusion I there said, 'Let me add that I presume not to interfere with the conscience of any who (to use the words of our first reformed Liturgy) think needful, or convenient, for the quieting of their consciences particularly to open their sins to the priest *at any time*. What I *deprecate* is that this should be made a *regular observance*, still more, that any priest *should advise it as such*.'

"If you have kept within the plain meaning of this my counsel, you have a right to claim the authority of your Bishop for what you have done; if you have exceeded it, you have not only exceeded it, but run counter to it.

"I am, Rev. Sir, yours sincerely,

"H. EXETER."

To this letter Prynné replied as follows on October 6th:—

"MY LORD,

"I beg to acknowledge your Lordship's letter of the 4th inst. I believe I may

safely say that there has been nothing in my practice respecting private confession which is opposed to the opinion expressed in your Lordship's letter. I conceived my answer to Mr. Nantes was a sufficient one to give to a person bringing a charge against me. If Mr. Nantes objected to any statement made by me, he was bound to show grounds of that objection beyond his own private opinion, and it seemed to me that no grounds short of an authoritative statement in the authorized documents of the Church herself would have been sufficient for this purpose. I went on to say, 'I can find no such declaration of her mind—all I can find serves to show me that she leaves her children entirely at liberty to use this means of grace whenever their spiritual necessities require it. There is no prohibition, or shadow of a prohibition, that I know of, to prevent their doing so ;' and again at the end of the paragraph, 'in short, I have only meant to assert for the members of the Church of England general and absolute freedom of being allowed to unburden their minds to their ministers whenever they desire it for their souls' good. Such a freedom I do believe to be most in accordance with her spirit.'

"In this passage, my Lord, I intended to say, that the Church of England does not *prohibit* or authoritatively *exclude* the general habit of confession. I expressly guarded myself by saying, 'I did not mean to assert that the Church of England recommends confession ordinarily, but was silent about it, and left it to the consciences

of individuals.' And such has been my practice. I have not taught it as a duty, I have not brought or trained persons to look on it as a 'regular observance or a part of the ordinary discipline of a Christian life;' but, on the other hand, I am not aware of any statement of the Church of England which would justify me, as one of her ministers, in *refusing to receive* persons who desire of their own accord, or, I may add, by the advice of their parents or guardians, to come to me regularly for this purpose. I repeat, my Lord, I have not enforced or taught this practice as a part of my ordinary teaching, but I have also not felt myself at liberty to reject those who did think they found it useful as an habitual practice, and desired on that account to use it as such.

"I venture, respectfully, to put this case to your Lordship (which, I may add, is not an imaginary one)—supposing a person to come to me, at his own particular request, several times in the course of the year for confession, have I any authority from the Church of England to refuse to receive that person? I will further suppose that I fully press upon the person the necessity of private self-examination and repentance, but that he still argues that he finds confession a great help and means of grace, and presses on me my obligation to receive him. Is it your Lordship's opinion that I should be authorized by the Church of England (whatever my own private opinions might be) to reject such a person?

"In submitting this case for your Lordship's

consideration, I would humbly venture to remind your Lordship that there are many persons in the Church of England who deeply value private confession as a means of grace, and who use it regularly as such, and that it would be a great shock to their minds to be deprived of it. For my own part, I would not dare to do so unless I had some most indisputable authority to bear me out in so doing. I would also venture to suggest that the consciences of those who use private confession, and are in the habit of that self-examination which it involves, become more alive to the guilt of sin, and that even if they do not relapse at times into their old sins, they yet look on other minor sins as of a serious nature. There are, my Lord, persons who from a constant habit of self-examination and self-accusation find that very frequently their conscience is burdened with weighty matters which bring them under the class specified in the Exhortation to Communion. Does the Church of England require of her ministers to refuse to this class of persons (and it contains many of her most earnest and spiritual children) what they esteem as so great a means of grace to their souls?

“With reference to your Lordship’s remarks on my quotation from your Lordship’s Pastoral Letter of last year, I would humbly beg to observe that had I been quoting your Lordship’s sentiments as bearing on the subject of private confessions generally, I should certainly have thought it my duty fully to have expressed those

sentiments; but I was only quoting in support of my argument of the entire liberty which the Church of England gives her children to use this means of grace whenever their spiritual necessities required it. On this point I trust I was not unfairly claiming your Lordship's support.

"I have the honour to be

"Your Lordship's faithful and obedient servant,

"G. R. PRYNNE."

To this the Bishop replied:—

"As I do not think that the Church of England prohibits your receiving to confession those who seek it as an habitual practice, I do not presume to prohibit your doing so. The Church seems to me to discourage such a practice; therefore, I should endeavour to *dissuade* one who came to me in pursuance of the practice from persisting to desire it. If I had sufficient reason to believe that he had *not* endeavoured honestly and earnestly to *quiet his own conscience* by self-examination and other acts of repentance, I should not myself admit him. More than this, I must decline saying.

"Yours sincerely,

"H. EXETER."

Prynne was the recipient of many letters of sympathy and congratulation on the result of the enquiry from friends who recognized, with Pusey, that he was contending for a vital principle of the Catholic faith and not a merely individual belief. Pusey wrote on September 25th:—

"God be thanked. It seems better than if the matter had never been tried. But I fear, as the Bishop of Exeter says, the Orphans' Home and Sisters of Mercy will incur obloquy from its being known that these persons were inmates for years there. I am anxious to see the worst which is made of it in any Plymouth paper. I suppose that the fact is, that any very bad things which were confessed were before they went to the Orphans' Home. I should think that if so you might shape a statement without breaking the seal, attesting that 'whereas it was said,' etc., 'this is only a sample of temptations to which young persons are exposed in Plymouth, but from which the inmates of the Orphans' Home are happily sheltered.' Perhaps it may not be necessary. You would let me (if it were necessary) see anything before it was published. God be with you."

Dr. Neale wrote on October 1st :—

"Although I have not the pleasure of a personal acquaintance, yet I hope you will allow me to congratulate you on the result of the late proceedings with regard to confession, not so much for your own sake, but for the step in advance which we have gained by means of those proceedings. It is fearful to think what the result might have been in any but the Diocese of Exeter, and it surely is not less than providential that in that Diocese the event should have happened.

"The pain and trouble which all these things

must have caused you must be amply made good ; and I am sure that all of us owe you a deep debt of gratitude."

The Bishop wrote on October 1st :—

"I thank you for a copy of the *West of England Conservative*, containing your own statement in justification of yourself. That statement (which, however, I have been able to read only cursorily) appears to me most satisfactory for its own purpose, and very important to the great principle involved in the inquiry.

"I may have appeared to you unkind, perhaps somewhat unfair even, in not giving you an opportunity of reading that statement to the meeting. But the truth is that, finding enough already established to exonerate you from all blame, I deemed it most prudent to be content with this. The pile of books and papers which were before you made me apprehensive that you would, quite unnecessarily, tire your hearers, and perhaps even give some of them an opportunity of criticizing your words unfavourably. Had I known what the tone and character of your statement would be, and its moderate length, I should have acted differently.

"To Mr. Darling, too, I fear that I owe an apology. I hope, indeed, that I was not guilty of the injustice of being partial against him from the contemptible fear of being supposed partial in favour of you ; but I think it very possible that my desire to abridge a proceeding, the issue of which was apparent to me, may have led me to

exhibit an undue degree of impatience. Pray tell him from me that I estimate highly the talent, the spirit, and Christian zeal in a good cause which were evinced by him on that occasion.

"In conclusion, accept my hearty congratulations on the issue of this trying affair."

Although, as we have seen, the Bishop subsequently subjected the written defence to some criticism, he continued to regard it with general approval.

Mr. J. D. Chambers wrote on October 21st :—

"Let me again congratulate you on the defeat of your calumniators. They refuse to bring you before the legitimate tribunal, and, conscious of their own dishonesty and factious spirit, refer to that to which they know you neither can nor will appeal.

"Nevertheless, if they send up any petition to the Archbishop, if I were you, I would do the same, or to the Crown, and publish it, *but avoid law*. I find by reference to the old Sarum books that there was *no form* for *private* confession or absolution enjoined on the clergy previous to the Reformation. The form used corresponds exactly with ours for the Visitation of the Sick—there was no other. Yet notoriously confession was used as of obligation before the Reformation. This seems to me to completely dispose of the argument, that because the Church of England gives no form for private confession it is not intended there should be any. The Reformers, in fact, left the matter precisely as they found it."

The Rev. Charles Gutch wrote from St. Saviour's, Leeds, saying :—

“I have watched with no little interest the course of events at Plymouth, in which you and your devoted fellow-labourers have again and again been the instruments in vindicating the Catholic character of our Church. Now that you have once more silenced your detractors, you must allow me on behalf of our little Brotherhood to offer you our warmest congratulations. Your example is the more cheering to us because, when a similar investigation was instituted against the late St. Saviour's clergy, eighteen months ago, the Bishop's judgment was unhappily against them, and their subsequent secession very naturally confirmed it.

“I have one other object in writing, and it is to beg you, if you can find time for such a relaxation, to pay us a visit during our Dedication Feast, which commences on the eve of St. Simon and St. Jude and continues through the Octave. We are expecting many friends whom I think it will be a gratification for you to meet. If you can also assist in the services by preaching one of the sermons, you will much increase our obligation. I commend our work to your prayers, with the assurance that yours in Plymouth has for long been the subject of my own.”

The result of the enquiry and the Bishop's qualified approval of Prynn's teaching on the subject of confession were by no means satisfactory to the

Protestants of Plymouth, who returned to the charge with renewed violence. On October 12th, a "monster meeting" was held at Stonehouse, to protest against the confessional, as practised at St. Peter's Church, Plymouth. Over one hundred clerics and laymen requisitioned the meeting, which was opened with the collect for grace, unity, and concord, said by the Rev. W. H. Nantes, of St. George's Chapel, Stonehouse—one of the three complainants whose case had so utterly broken down before the Bishop. The meeting decided to memorialize Parliament, the Crown, and the Archbishop of Canterbury, on "the subject of the confessional," and was altogether remarkable for the self-importance and intemperance of language exhibited by its leaders. Mr. Hatchard, baffled in his attempts to ruin a brother clergyman's moral character, now publicly charged Prynne with committing a breach of the 113th Canon, and revealing secrets entrusted to him under the seal of the confessional. Considering the attitude of the accuser and his friends towards confession, this accusation seems little less than ludicrous. Eventually, when called upon by the Bishop to make good his words in a Court of Law, Mr. Hatchard declined to do so, avowing that, if prosecuted, he was prepared to defend his action. To appeal to the local courts at this moment of inflamed opinion was, of course, useless. Prynne, therefore, swore a declaration before the Mayor of Plymouth, denying in the most distinct and circumstantial manner that he had ever made any revelation of facts confessed by witnesses at the inquiry. Finding that he had gone too far, Mr. Hatchard at length retracted. Another ridiculous

statement which, after it had done its subtle work, was also retracted, was that Pusey had been seen going up a ladder to a room above St. Peter's to hear confessions.

The agitation, so sedulously fostered by monster meetings and other methods with which the present generation is not entirely unfamiliar, reached its climax when the Bishop held the postponed Confirmation, as he had originally intended, in St. Peter's Church. The Bishop was not the man to shrink from any danger, or to be cowed by any threats of personal violence, and so the service was duly held. But the protesting clergy, in spite of Prynne's complete exoneration from the charges brought against him, withheld their candidates, and their supporters surrounded the church with a howling mob, threatening the Bishop and Vicar with personal assault, and smashing the windows of Prynne's house while his Diocesan was resting there. On returning from the church, stones were hurled at the Bishop, and the clergy surrounded him in order to protect him while crossing the square. Loud cries were raised by the mob, demanding that Prynne should be hung to an adjacent lamp-post. The disgraceful riot is well described in the following extract from the *West of England Conservative* :—

“If ever there was a service that showed itself to be a reality, it was the Confirmation at St. Peter's Church on Wednesday last. Amid so much that was painful, there was much that was gratifying. On the one hand, we saw scenes re-enacted in the streets of a Christian town, worthy

of those which abounded in the ages when persecution was the necessary inheritance of bishops and priests. We saw a representative and successor of the Apostles treated as the Apostles themselves were wont to be of yore. We saw an aged bishop hooted, reviled, and insulted with expressions of obscenity, blasphemy, and scurrility, by a mob which, in all but its respectability of dress, would best find its counterpart in the Faubourg of St. Antoine. We saw him moving with firm and undaunted countenance amidst the shocking sights and sounds which assailed him, defended, like St. Paul, by the civil power from his own misguided flock. We saw him stand (and we shall not easily forget the scene) upon the step of the church, and facing the crowd wave them back, as though he would prevent their desecrating the sacred place with angry and irreverent voices. On the other hand, within the church itself, all was as smooth and quiet as could be wished. There was neither noise, nor disturbance, nor crushing. It was a happy thought, and one perhaps useful for other occasions, that the church doors were thrown wide open as soon as the service commenced. The crowd, which had been so noisy a moment before, finding itself thus suddenly ushered within the sacred walls, was, in spite of itself, awed into silence. Hats were removed and voices were lowered instinctively. Many heard what, perhaps, they had seldom heard before, the Litany of the Church of England, and saw probably for the first time in their lives a bishop administering Confirmation.

Those who did could not help being impressed with the scene; for, as we have already said, it was a reality and looked like one. Never was a public ceremony conducted with more decency, order, and reverence. Few who were present will forget it. Few will forget the electrical burst with which the response 'I do' was given, when the Bishop put the question a second time to the candidates; and if the impressive and solemn manner of the brave old man, as he stood at the chancel screen, with firm look and earnest gesticulation, did not sink into the hearts of those who came to scoff and to revile, it may be hoped that it did in the case of those who came for a better and holier purpose."

Another paper, summarizing "the painful and shocking events of the last few months," admirably criticized the behaviour of the Protestant agitators as that of Jesuits in disguise, conspiring for the furtherance of Catholic principles:—

"The High Church party must look with infinite satisfaction on the course which their unscrupulous opponents have lately adopted. . . . First, there was the vote at the Orphan Asylum, in which this band of clerical conspirators crossed the Rubicon, unfurled the standard of rebellion, and committed themselves to a resolution, by which they proceeded at once to deprive children, committed to their charge, of a means of grace, and to defy lawful authority. They then proceeded to bring charges against an innocent and

respectable clergyman, on evidence which turned out to be utterly worthless and contemptible. On this being proved by a most searching and impartial inquiry, instead of offering a graceful apology, they fling themselves into a fit of frantic indignation, summon a grand council of their tribe, perform a terrific war-dance, and commit, in fact, all those extraordinary antics which persons are apt to commit when they have made a great blunder and are very angry with themselves for it. The result of this war-council is a petition to the Queen, the Primate, and the Houses of Parliament, to take such measures as shall enable the Church of England to repudiate the doctrines and practices which the war-council had met to denounce. But this is not all—the chiefs of the tribe bring fresh accusations against the clergyman they are endeavouring to crush, and when their Bishop calls on them to substantiate their charges and offers them every facility for so doing, they shrink from the task. One step further, and we see a ferocious mob, under the influence of the excitement thus brought to bear on them, insulting and assaulting an aged Prelate in his Episcopal robes, in open day, at the door of the House of God. How can such a course of action fail to produce a reaction in the minds of all moderate and candid persons? How can it fail to suggest a contrast between the conduct of the assailed and assailants, very unfavourable to the latter? Who can help seeing that, however successful Mr. Prynne's accusers may be in

personal abuse and vague declamation, they have utterly failed, whenever they have attempted to bring a definite charge, or an accusation which could be subjected to a legal investigation ?”

There can be no doubt that the journalist's contention was correct. The prolonged agitation and bitter persecution, some of the more notable phases of which we have described, did in the result serve to strengthen Prynne's hands and win a readier acceptance for the Catholic principles of which he was the recognized exponent. That he would in any case have been successful in the ultimate result we feel assured ; but at St. Peter's, as at other churches famous for their share in the Catholic Revival, the very remarkable and rapid success that attended the commencement of the work was undoubtedly due to the tactics of its opponents and the wide publicity that attached to their proceedings. We have heard of more than one case where an avowed opponent was won over to sympathy and support of the work at St. Peter's, in direct consequence of the persecution that culminated in the riot on the Confirmation day ; while the publicity of the proceedings drew attention to the work that was being carried on in Plymouth, and enlisted help and support from all parts of the country. Prynne was too humble-minded and retiring ever to have courted notoriety on his own account, though steadfast and unflinching in principle and firm in his determination to yield nothing in his defence of that which he knew to be right. It is, therefore, entirely due to his persecutors that his quiet mission work at St. Peter's became so widely

known and appreciated. When Prynne was so shamefully persecuted and attacked, Catholics felt that it was, as Dr. Pusey put it, an attack on their own cause, and rallied to his support accordingly. With an ignorance which the students of Protestant outbreaks in more recent days will not find difficult to understand, Prynne's name was associated in the public mind with all that was horrible and alarming. The well-known story of Dr. Pusey and the lamb that he was supposed to sacrifice every Friday might easily have been paralleled at Plymouth, in which town a ghostly ancestor of Lady Wimborne's famous quadruped long ago had its day, and ceased to be. When on occasion Prynne went out to preach in some West-country parish far from the scene of his labours, people who had only heard of this terrible person, the embodiment of Popery and Puseyism, rushed to see him, and were surprised to find a handsome young clergyman, of winning address, possessing a voice of exceptional beauty and sweetness, and altogether unlike the strange creature of their inflamed and excited imaginings.

In reviewing the events of those early Tractarian days in Plymouth, it is impossible to over-estimate the value to the Catholic cause of Bishop Philpotts's attitude throughout the whole of the trouble. Without attempting to estimate the Bishop's theological position with exactness, there is ample evidence in his treatment of Prynne as to the fearless impartiality, moral courage, and strong grasp of principle which influenced his every action. His sympathetic treatment of Dr. Pusey, when, in 1844, that good priest went into Devonshire under the ban of University

suspension, sufficiently indicates the Bishop's courage in differing from the majority of his episcopal brethren when he felt it right to do so; and his treatment of Prynne during the years that followed was quite in keeping with this indifference to ignorant clamour from whatever quarter it proceeded. As Dr. Neale remarked, "It is fearful to think what the result might have been in any other Diocese than Exeter," where the firmness and courage of the Bishop stood out in striking contrast to that of most of his episcopal brethren of the period. To Prynne the support of such a Diocesan was invaluable, and went a long way towards winning acceptance or toleration for his views from many who might not otherwise have sympathized with him. Those who have read Mr. Newland's lectures on the early days of Tractarianism, and the other literature dealing with that period, will realize that the Catholic cause in the West owed much of its success to the sober-minded wisdom and statesmanlike policy of Dr. Philpotts at a very critical moment in its history.

At Plymouth, of course, Prynne was the man selected for attack—the Puseyite *par excellence*, against whom the whole force of the enemy was directed. But there were other priests here and there in the Diocese standing for the same hated principles, prominent among these being the Rev. W. J. Coope, Rector of Falmouth; Mr. Flower, whose appointment to Christ Church, Plymouth, had aroused the utmost indignation against the Bishop; Mr. Kilpack, of St. James's, Devonport; and others.

CHAPTER VIII

Development of parochial work—The Society of the Holy Trinity—
The revival of the religious life—Bishop Philpotts and the Sister-
hood—Extension of the Society's work—Prynne and Miss Sellon
—Estrangement from Dr. Pusey—Dr. Neale and the East
Grinstead Sisters—Mother Kate's reminiscences of St. Peter's—
The Wantage Community—Prynne on the growth of Sisterhoods
(1887)—Rescue work at Plymouth.

DURING this stirring time, the incidents of which have necessarily been treated at considerable length, the work of building up a parochial organization in the new parish of St. Peter's went on and prospered. Prynne's capacity for attracting adherents and gathering a congregation early manifested itself, and the advertisement which his misguided opponents so liberally provided him, brought the financial assistance which is so vitally necessary for mission work amongst the very poor. The endowment of the living since the consecration of the church had been raised to £150, in addition to which the Vicar obtained a grant from one of the societies towards the stipend of an assistant priest, and £50 which the Bishop gave him out of his private means for a similar purpose, and continued to grant annually till his death. This, and other private assistance, enabled him to keep always two, and usually three, curates—not at all too large a staff considering the character of the district and the rapid increase in its population.

With the addition of the sanctuary and the general improvements in the arrangement of the church, he now possessed a sufficiently suitable building for Divine worship till means and opportunity should be found for the erection of a larger and more dignified edifice. Of ceremonial such as now adorns the services of St. Peter's and so many other churches in Plymouth and elsewhere, there was little or none at that time. The choristers' surplices—regarded as a dreadful development—were, as Mr. Prynne used to relate, merely pinafores made of rough towelling, while the Eucharistic Vestments were not used at St. Peter's until they had first been adopted at St. Stephen's, Devonport, another of the newer churches of the Three Towns. But the teaching was thoroughly Catholic and sound, as may be gathered from the bitter controversy that had raged round so vital a doctrine as the Sacrament of Penance.

In the work of the mission Miss Sellon and her Sisters gave valuable help, and considerably lightened the labours of the small staff of clergy. Something has already been said concerning the Devonport Society—or the Society of the Holy Trinity—which very early in its history became so intimately associated with Prynne and his work in St. Peter's parish. Miss Sellon's original intention, as has been stated, was to engage specially in educational work among the poor of the Three Towns; but this purpose was soon extended, and after its transference to St. Peter's parish the young community was engaged about many good works, including the care of the sick, an orphanage for girls, homes for sailor boys and aged sailors, industrial and ragged schools, model

lodging-houses, homes for destitute children, etc. The organization of the Society on the basis of a religious community was undoubtedly carried out under the direction of Dr. Pusey, but in all matters concerning the Sisterhood and its work Miss Sellon exercised the privileges and prerogatives belonging to the office of Superior to the very fullest extent. The enthusiasm which led her to take up the work, suddenly, in 1848 (she had previously visited the community at Park Village and gained some knowledge of Sisterhood life), never seems to have flagged; her mind and will dominated everything, even down to the smallest detail. As the work extended and its organization grew larger, this state of things threw an immense burden upon Miss Sellon, whose mental activity was ever greatly in excess of her physical strength. To this the limitations of her work may in part be attributed. Naturally, too, the revival of Sisterhood life was attended by circumstances of special difficulty. As Pusey's biographers have told us, probably not even the great leader himself quite realized the gravity and intricacy of those circumstances—often involving delicate family relations—which he would be called upon to settle, nor the force of prejudice that the religious life would naturally excite, nor the difficulty of restraining and guiding the emotional and sensitive characters with whom he would be brought in contact. And what is here said of Pusey applies with equal force, though in more limited degree, to Prynne, whose relations with the community and its Superior were necessarily of the closest character from the moment that the society was transferred to his parish. It could hardly be

otherwise, St. Peter's and the Sisterhood—and those who stood at the head of both—being the common aim of the bitter persecution which took place. In moments of more than usual distress, Miss Sellon proved herself a real friend to the young priest, his wife, and child, for whom she provided a roof and the necessary furniture when the young married couple had been deprived of absolutely everything they possessed, as the result of the early effort on Prynne's part to clear his character from vile insinuations levelled against him, already described. The publication of Mr. Spurrell's pamphlet, and others already alluded to, caused Bishop Philpotts to inquire closely into the working of the community, and ultimately to withdraw his official association from it as visitor, which had been, as he remarked, "little more than a mere title." The Bishop in taking this step gave his reasons "to the world" in the form of a "Letter to Miss Sellon" (John Murray, London), dated March 20, 1852. The admirable tone of his lordship's words is further emphasized in a subsequent letter, written nine days later :—

" Bishopstowe, March 29, 1852.

" MY DEAR MISS SELLON,

" Not only your own letter of Saturday last, but intelligence which has reached me from another quarter, makes me apprehend that the intention with which I wrote my published letter to you has been greatly misunderstood.

" In announcing to you my withdrawing from the office of visitor of your community, I stated my reasons to be—first, that the course of your

operations had carried you beyond the limits within which I deemed it prudent to confine my own official connection with you ; and secondly, that I could hardly continue that connection without incurring the responsibility of seeming to sanction practices which, without having a right to condemn, I nevertheless might not approve. At any rate, the inquiries and explanations, which were likely to become necessary, must interfere with the discharge of my own special duties of this extensive diocese.

“But although I cease to be your visitor, I should be more grieved than I need express, if on this account you should cease to carry on your blessed work at Plymouth. No ; let me again thank you, as your Bishop, for having proved by that work that the Church of England is not so cramped and stinted in its Christian action as not to admit Sisters of Mercy within its border.

“Let me, moreover, say, that if, in the exercise of that liberty which our Church allows alike to you and to those who may differ most widely from you, some things may have been done to which I decline to give my sanction, yet I am fully confident in your entire faithfulness to that Church. Would that all they who are among the loudest in condemning you were as really animated by its spirit as you have proved yourself to be—as earnestly practised its precepts—aye, and as truly understood its doctrines.

“Go on, then, I beseech you, in your labour of love amongst us ; and may He who hath given to

you and to those who labour with you the desire and will thus to devote your time, your substance, your faculties of body and mind, your whole selves, to His service, accept and bless the offering! May He continue to cheer you with the sight of His work prospering in your hands, and, in His own good time, crown you with everlasting Glory in that kingdom where all is peace, and joy, and love.

“Farewell, and believe me,

“Always affectionately yours,

“H. EXETER.”

The work of the community not only went on in the Three Towns, but was extended to other places, including Bristol, where the Sisters inhabited a house near the cathedral; and Falmouth, where one or two of the Sisters worked under Mr. Coope, then the Rector of that seaport. Miss Sellon, when at Bristol, often lived in a tiny cottage, 14, Lower College Green, in that city. Ascot Priory, Berks, Dr. Pusey's favourite retreat in later years and the scene of his death, was another extension of the society's work, the hospital for convalescent and incurable women and children being established there by Miss Sellon in 1861. Miss Sellon travelled from one to the other of these houses, and in the later sixties got as far as Honolulu, in the Hawaiian Islands, where she established St. Andrew's Priory, a school for natives, half-castes, and foreigners. The visit of the Mother Superior to this distant spot, and the service with which the Priory grounds were set apart, are commemorated by a large coral cross, which stands beneath

cocoa-nut trees, Royal palms, and other beautiful foliage, not far from St. Andrew's Cathedral. Here Miss Sellon placed several of her community, Mother Bertha, who had gone with Florence Nightingale in 1854 to nurse the wounded soldiers in the Crimea, being given charge of this missionary development. Mother Bertha eventually became the second Superior of the Society. Of the other devoted women who went out to the Hawaiian Islands so long ago, two, Sisters Beatrice and Albertina, still survive, and have remained there ever since, doing splendid work until compelled by old age to seek the ease and rest they have so justly earned. There, in the midst of that paradise of the Pacific, the writer visited them in August, 1904, and found them full of happy memories of the past, calmly enjoying their present repose, and peacefully awaiting the call that shall once more reunite them to their friends and co-workers who have already passed within the veil.

At Plymouth in the early years Prynne, as we have said, was Miss Sellon's helper and adviser, so far as this was possible under the circumstances. His friendship with Pusey simplified his position in regard to such matters as spiritual direction of the Sisters. Miss Sellon, whether at home or travelling, was ever keenly anxious about the work at Plymouth, and especially about her "dear little sailors," as she called the boys of her home in Wyndham Square. Prynne himself was much with the boys, accompanying them on voyages round the coast, and enjoying their young companionship with that pleasure he ever evinced in the society of little ones. On one of

these voyages the captain and mate of the vessel were taken seriously ill, and Prynne, who was a thoroughly good sailor, took command, and brought the ship safely into port. Miss Sellon was godmother to Prynne's eldest son, and Miss Catherine Sellon, sister of the Mother Superior, stood as godmother to Prynne's little daughter Lucy. As Miss Sellon's periods of ill-health increased she was much at Asherne, where the long attacks of prostration and severe pain from which she suffered caused extreme anxiety to Dr. Pusey and her other friends. At this time she had for several years the care and companionship of Prynne's little daughter Lucy, in whom both the Mother Superior and the famous divine took the warmest interest. When eventually, in response to the parental desire, the little one returned to her home, a certain estrangement occurred between Prynne and the Mother Superior, and the old relations were never re-established. The circumstances also affected the friendly association of Prynne and Pusey, the latter, then as ever, regarding with the utmost seriousness anything which seemed likely to trouble or distress one to whom, in his belief, God had given so great a work for good to do.

The revival of the religious life in a communion which had been a stranger to it for several centuries was of necessity attended with considerable difficulty, both from within and without. Pusey, Neale, Butler, and the other leaders more particularly associated with this revival had their share of these difficulties, and were often called upon to deal with grave and intricate questions, involving sometimes delicate family relations. Prynne, with his well-balanced

temperament, brought much practical common sense to bear upon matters of this sort, and, though his line of action regarding them might not always commend itself to the emotional and sensitive persons with whom he sometimes had to deal, there is no doubt that his judgment was highly esteemed by those leaders who knew him best. More than once, for example, we find Dr. Neale consulting him and seeking his assistance in circumstances of peculiar difficulty concerning the East Grinstead community. Six months before his death, in 1866, writing to Prynne regarding one branch of the work at East Grinstead, Dr. Neale goes on to say :—

“Next time you celebrate, would you remember us in our great sorrow about Soho? We have, however, a most interesting district in Shoreditch and Haggerstone. Concerning this the Mother made one of the happiest quotations I ever heard. Referring to the doubling of our population (St. Mary’s, Soho, being 7,000, and Haggerstone 14,000) she said, ‘So the Lord blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning, for he had fourteen thousand sheep.’”

The sorrow alluded to by Dr. Neale was, of course, the cessation of the St. Margaret’s Sisters’ work at St. Mary’s, Soho, where from 1858 to 1865 the earliest slum work of the community had been carried on under priests like Dr. Littledale and the Rev. J. C. Chambers.

At St. Peter’s, Plymouth, the Sisters of St. Thomas’, Oxford, had succeeded those of the Devonport Society, but in October, 1867, Prynne applied for two of the

East Grinstead Sisters to carry on the work in his parish. His request was granted, and Mother Kate, of St. Saviour's Priory—one of the two Sisters sent,—thus describes their arrival in St. Peter's:—

“We received a most kind and hearty welcome from Mr. Prynn and those devoted workers, the Misses Middleton, and we found in Plymouth a most congenial field of labour—parish work during the day, and night schools, for both boys and girls, in the evening, besides the Sunday schools. St. Peter's—it was old St. Peter's, remember, before the present handsome church was built—charmed us immensely; it was such a home-like church, and the home provided for us in Wyndham Place was opposite the east end. As for the people, our hearts opened to them at once, and to this day the sound of a Devonshire voice always kindles in me a friendly interest in the speaker for the sake of old Plymouth times. As to the boys, they seemed appalling at first, after the Londoners, they looked so strong and big, and their outer shell was so rough and uncouth. . . . However they soon became most friendly, and I valued the affection of the warm-hearted Devonshire lads more than I can say.”¹

The St. Margaret's Sisters continued to work very happily at St. Peter's until August, 1868, when the Plymouth Mission had to be given up in consequence of the reduction of the little community by the secession of so many of its members, including the Mother Superior of St. Mary's Priory. In those days of

¹ “Memories of a Sister of St. Saviour's Priory” (Mowbray & Co.).

bewilderment and distress, Prynne at Plymouth, like Mackonochie, J. D. Sedding, Robert Brett and other brave souls in London, did much to comfort and hearten the Sisters who remained faithful at a time of almost overwhelming anxiety. Shortly after the enforced withdrawal of the St. Margaret's Sisters, the community of St. Mary the Virgin, Wantage, responding to Prynne's invitation, planted its first mission in St. Peter's, Plymouth. This community, the formation of which was almost coincident with that of the Devonport Society, has been represented at St. Peter's ever since that time, the good work done by the succession of Sisters who have passed through the Plymouth house during the intervening years having proved of the utmost value in the parish and district.

In an address to the Exeter Diocesan Conference in 1887, Prynne made interesting reference to the growth of Sisterhood life which he had been permitted to witness during his ministry:—

“I remember well, though it is now more than forty years ago, that the idea of having such bands of devoted women among ourselves, as I had heard and read of in other ages and in other climes, did seem to me like a dream; and little did I then hope to see that glorious revival of religious fervour, which has kindled so many hearts to give up all for Jesus' sake, and in doing so, to realize deeper, purer, and more enduring joys than this world has to bestow. Yet to-day, as we cast our eyes around upon the work of the Church in our own and in foreign

lands, we are met by the blessed and encouraging sight of communities of devoted women of such a character as I have spoken of, engaged in helping on the great Mission Work of the Church—in instructing the ignorant, visiting and relieving the poor, comforting the sorrowful, nursing the sick, raising the fallen, and thus bringing home to all who come within the range of their influence the great truth, that the Church, like her Divine Head, sympathizes with all human woe, and longs with exceeding desire for the salvation, not only of all her members, but for the salvation of all those for whom Christ died."

Remembering the obloquy and suspicion with which his own efforts towards this revival of the religious life had been greeted in the 'fifties, it was indeed significant that forty years later the Exeter Diocesan Conference should adopt unanimously Prynne's resolution, urging the necessity that existed for the formation of Anglican Sisterhoods if the Church's work was to be faithfully performed. Truly these noble women have, as he maintained, "justified, and more than justified, their existence, by the noble work which they have done for God and His Church." For many years an Associate of the Wantage Community, Mr. Prynne was to the end of his life deeply interested in other communities at work in the neighbourhood of Plymouth, notably in the Sisters of the Holy Nativity, Knowle, at whose House of Rest in Plympton he was ever a welcome visitor.

The subject of rescue work, which during the whole of his long ministry at Plymouth occupied a

large place in his attentions, may fittingly be mentioned here. His first efforts in this direction date as far back as November, 1857, when some very distressing cases of the abduction of young girls from their parents' houses, and their concealment in a house of ill fame, deeply impressed him with the importance of making some special effort for rescuing a few out of the crowds of fallen women who thronged certain streets of the Three Towns. Prynne communicated to Bishop Philpotts a project for establishing a House of Refuge for the reception of these unfortunate women in Plymouth, and a Penitentiary in the neighbourhood, to which those might be sent, who, after trial, should give evidence of a sincere desire to reform their lives. The Bishop's answer to Mr. Prynne was expressive of his Lordship's hearty sympathy in the work, and sincere pleasure at its being begun, coupled with the promise of support in enabling it to be carried out. Prynne's illness, however, and his inability to secure efficient workers, or raise the necessary means, delayed the work for some time. In 1859 his attention was again directed to its pressing urgency by a case which he himself records in his published pamphlet :—

“I was sent,” he says, “one day to visit a poor girl, aged nineteen years, in a bad locality, who was reported to be dying. I found her lying on a very thin mattress on the floor, with but scanty bedclothes. She was trying to dress a wound which a blister had made on her chest, with candle-grease in default of proper ointment. My first conversation with her, and prayers, were

much broken by her cough, which was most distressing. I at once proceeded to get her better attendance and some needful things. A few days after my first visit I had her removed, with the doctor's consent, to a little room close to my own house. This was her House of Refuge, and there for a fortnight she was watched over and nursed with tender care night and day. She had received Christian instruction when a child, and was in a remarkable degree humble and teachable. God's grace seemed to work mightily in her heart, and her affectionate and gentle bearing to those about her, even in her severe suffering, will not soon be forgotten by those who witnessed it. We saw that her time would not be long. A few days before she died, I administered to her the Holy Communion. She herself knew that her time was short, but was perfectly resigned, gentle, and cheerful. She had a wish that I should be near her when she died. She thought she was dying one night, and sent for me at midnight. When I arrived at her door, she had rallied, and then, in touching simplicity, as if apologizing for having sent for me, she said, "Oh, sir! I can't die yet." A day or two after this she died, and I was only just in time for the closing scene. The tender care which we had given her during her last illness was continued after death. Reverently was she laid within her coffin, and at last followed to the grave by the ladies who had nursed her. I said over her body the beautiful service of the Church, as hopefully as over any I have ever

buried ; and often now as I walk in the cemetery, accompanied by one who knew her, we stop to look with interest on the grave of 'Mary the Penitent.'

"Some time after the death of this poor penitent girl, two other cases were specially brought to my notice. The first was that of a young girl, about seventeen years of age, who came to me in deep distress of mind. She had been led astray by a silly and vicious young man, and had then been induced to take lodgings in one of the numerous houses of ill-fame which exist in Plymouth. The poor girl was kept in this house for about a month, when remorse seized her, and she sought my aid to rescue her from her life of shame. I had no House of Refuge in which to place her, but I succeeded in getting lodgings for her, and procuring her some employment, until I was enabled to place her in a Penitentiary.

"The second case, one of most painful interest, was brought to my notice about the same time. A young girl, only two months above fourteen years of age, came to see me, accompanied by her mother. The poor child had been induced by a young woman to leave her mother's roof and take lodgings in what proved to be a house of ill-fame. After about a week the mother discovered where her daughter was, and by the aid of a policeman succeeded in getting her away. The young girl seemed sensible of her sin, but unwilling to return to her mother's house. I was enabled to get her into a Penitentiary. Another

case soon came before me. A young woman came and entreated my help, saying she was most truly anxious to give up her bad courses and lead a steady and respectable life. I had no House of Refuge, and could not get her at once into a Penitentiary. I lost sight of her, but felt that if I had had a House of Refuge to have placed her in she might have been rescued."

The delay in carrying out the designs he had laid before the Bishop tended in the end to the furtherance of the work. In the autumn of 1859 the Rev. George Mason, at that time assistant curate of St. Stephen's, Devonport, set on foot a home for fallen women in Devonport. In this he was aided by his wife, a lady eminently gifted for this work. A house was taken and furnished, and in a few weeks was full of those poor women for whom it had been established. The over-crowding of this house, and the heavy expenses necessarily incurred in its establishment and maintenance, led Mr. Mason to consider the necessity of combining with Prynne to establish a House of Mercy for the Three Towns.

Whilst they were making needful enquiries for a suitable house, it happened that the Hon. and Rev. C. L. Courtenay, afterwards Canon Courtenay, came to Devonport. He at once became deeply interested in the work, and shortly afterwards wrote to Prynne to suggest that the work should be altogether moved away from the Three Towns. After consultation with some of the clergy in his own immediate locality, he determined to make the effort of establishing a House of Mercy at Bovey Tracey for the whole of

South Devon. The effort was, by God's blessing, eminently successful, and resulted in the establishment of one of the very best conducted Houses of Mercy in the whole of England. It proved of unspeakable value to the clergy working in the Three Towns, and never, if there was room, have pressing cases been refused. The work, however, at Devonport still went on, and when Mr. Mason left, it was taken up by Miss Sellon's Sisters, and is still carried on by their representatives, working in connection with the Church Penitentiary Association. The Threefold Cord Society, which has done such admirable work in a similar direction in the Three Towns, was due largely to Prynne's initiative, and he was keenly interested in its operations up to the time of his death.

CHAPTER IX

Parochial organization—Degraded character of St. Peter's district—Erection of the chapel of the Good Shepherd (1862)—Creation of All Saints' parish—Provision of new day schools—Prynne on religious education—Formation of parochial guilds—The Society of the Love of Jesus—Prynne and the Roman Catholic communion—Rev. J. Leycester Lyne and St. Peter's—Prynne and parochial missions—A Lenten Pastoral (1866).

AFTER the stormy period of the early 'fifties the parish and its hard-working staff of clergy and Sisters enjoyed comparative peace, and during this period the work of building up the parochial organization upon a sound basis went steadily on. In the decennial period from 1851 to 1861 the population of the parish increased enormously, it being no less than one-third of the whole increase of Devon for the same period. The census of 1861 revealed to Prynne that he had now the spiritual care of a population of 10,430 souls, as compared with the 5,137 to whom he was originally sent to minister. This rapid increase, together with a marked distinction between the character of the population in the higher and lower parts of the parish, suggested the provision of a mission school in the poorer and more degraded district that bordered on Stonehouse Lane, as King Street was then called. Some conception of the district referred to may be gathered from a description

penned by Prynné himself. Writing more than twenty years ago, he said :—

“When I have to answer questions touching the occupations of the inhabitants of this parish, I speak of them as labouring, manufacturing, and seafaring ; but this is a very imperfect description. There are doubtless all these classes ; but there are also a good many small shopkeepers, old clothes sellers, rag and bone storekeepers, costermongers, ‘chandlers,’—who sell anything, from ‘ladies’ brass ornaments down to second-hand shoes, rusty nails, and farthing dips,—small public-house keepers, lodging-house keepers for travellers (*i.e.* tramps), and also, I grieve to say, keepers of houses of a much worse description. The overcrowding in some of the lodging-houses is frightful, two families in some cases occupying one room. This ought to be regulated by the authorities, for it is a cause of great immorality. There is also an Irish quarter, sunk in the deepest poverty. It is, I believe, sometimes thought that in sending out appeals for help to carry on spiritual work we exaggerate the ignorance and vice around us. It would be difficult to do so, I think, as regards some parts of this Parish.”

The state of such parts of the parish as this was, of course, at its worst in the 'fifties, when the degradation of the poor in the crowded quarters of all our large towns had reached the lowest point. Prynné, and his contemporary at Holy Trinity,

Plymouth, often related the hideous story of those days, when whole streets were occupied, almost without exception, by houses of ill-fame, tenanted by the most debased class of wretched women, who nightly thronged the streets of this great naval and military centre. It must be confessed, alas! that notwithstanding the spread of education and social progress, and the wider realization of their responsibilities by sanitary and municipal authorities, the condition of some parts of Plymouth is little better to-day than when Prynne wrote the above description, more than twenty years ago. The overcrowding is possibly as bad, and the material condition of the people but slightly improved. As to its morality, certain streets still bear an unenviable reputation, while the removal of the more respectable classes from congested portions of the town, still further lowers the tone of whole districts.

The provision of St. Peter's Mission Chapel, a small but pretty building which still stands in Octagon Street, was accomplished in 1862, the erection of this very useful and well-situated building only occupying six months. Intended to be used as a schoolroom and chapel, a movable screen was provided to shut off the sanctuary when the building was in use for secular purposes. The foundation stone of the chapel was laid on May 12, 1862, by the Bishop of Honolulu—who at that time was acting for the Bishop of Exeter—and a large body of clergy and laity attended. The day was observed as a Holy Day, the Holy Eucharist being celebrated at 8 a.m. At 11 the Bishop and clergy, preceded by the choir chanting Psalm xlvii., went in procession to St. Peter's,

where, Matins having been sung, a solemn celebration of the Holy Eucharist followed, the Bishop being celebrant. After the service the procession went to the site, singing the Psalm lxviii., and the foundation stone was laid according to customary form. A public luncheon followed. The choirs of St. Stephen and St. Mary, Devonport, assisted on this occasion; and among the clergy present were the Revs. J. Bliss and H. Marriott, of St. James-the-Less, Plymouth; the Revs. G. Proctor and C. Tollemache, of St. Stephen's, Devonport; and the Rev. A. B. Hutchison, of St. James', Keyham. The names are of interest as tending to evidence the growth of the Catholic Movement in the newer districts of the Three Towns at this early date. The chapel, which has been in turn called St. Peter's and St. Augustine's, is now known as the Chapel of the Good Shepherd. It was never consecrated, but was opened on November 2, 1862, an Octave being kept, with special services and preachers daily. It ceased to be a schoolroom when the present girls' and infants' schools were opened, in 1871, in Wyndham Square, and has ever since been used as a mission chapel for the poorer part of the parish, ecclesiastically dependent upon the mother church, but with an organization and special mission character of its own.

The erection of the Chapel of the Good Shepherd did not, however, solve the problem of the increase of population, which continued at a rapid rate, and in 1871 reached a total of 15,414. The parish, which had long since reached its limits on its southern and western sides, had been steadily developing eastwards along the line of the Great Western Railway to

Millbay. In 1867 steps were first taken to obtain the sanction of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners to the formation of a new parish in this district, which was originally intended to be called St. Mark's, the dedication being subsequently changed to All Saints. Funds were raised for its partial endowment, and the erection of a church was shortly afterwards commenced. The official sanction to the formation of this parochial district was deferred until after the consecration of the new church on November 8, 1874, the Order in Council approving of the formation being dated May 13, 1875. The first incumbent of All Saints was the Rev. S. W. E. Bird, afterwards of St. Sidwell's, Exeter, and he was succeeded by the Rev. C. R. Chase in 1878. Owing to lack of funds the church, designed by Mr. James Hine, has never been completed ; but there is a fine chancel and temporary nave, capable of accommodating seven hundred, all the seats being free. A clergy house, adjoining the church, was built, from the design of the late J. D. Sedding, in 1887, and a commodious parish room was added in 1893, the whole forming an admirable centre for the vigorous and self-denying work which has long been a characteristic of All Saints.

Going back a little in the order of date, we find the Vicar of St. Peter's devoting considerable attention to the education of the young, a subject which was ever near his heart. The Bishop had said, in 1848, how badly schools were needed in the Three Towns ; ten years later Prynne obtained a site for his day schools, close to the church, the buildings, designed by the late Mr. G. E. Street, R.A., being opened in

1858. The trust deed conveying the site for these buildings is peculiar, and characteristic of Prynne's caution and sagacity. The land was conveyed to the vicar and churchwardens for the purpose of erecting schools wherein the children of the poor might be educated in the principles of the Established Church; but the management of the schools and the appointment of teachers was to be under the sole control of the vicar and his churchwardens, thereby, as the framer of the deed no doubt hoped, permanently safeguarding the character of the religious instruction to be given against any possible contingencies. All through his life Prynne held the strongest views as to the value of Church schools and the importance of religious education. We have noticed the attention he devoted to the subject in his early days in Cornwall and at Clifton, and how his first work in Plymouth was the establishment of a temporary school for boys, to serve till permanent buildings could be erected. In his later years he was sensibly impressed with the difficulties which free education and Board School competition increasingly caused, but he never wavered in a feeling of his responsibility to maintain the schools he had founded, and he viewed with undisguised misgiving and openly expressed mistrust the policy embodied in the Education Act of 1902. He could not bring himself to see how acquiescence in this Act could be possible without a breach of trust towards those who had subscribed to the erection and foundation of his schools. Writing in January, 1902, he concluded an exhaustive examination of the Government proposals as they then stood, with the following words:—

"Is there, I ask, any body of professing Christians existing in this country who have in the past made such sacrifices for the education of the poor, either before the passing of the School Board Act in 1870, or since that period, as the Church of England? Time and money have been lavishly spent by her members in this great cause ; but to sacrifice principle is quite a different matter. And it does seem to many as a sacrifice of the principles on which our Church schools are founded, to allow any doctrine to be taught in them other than those of the Church of England, or even in flat contradiction of her teaching."

Again, writing to the Rev. W. Howard Coates, Vicar of Christ Church, Plymouth, but a short time before his death, he remarked :—

"Entrusted with the cure of souls in our respective parishes, this, of course, includes children, and involves necessarily responsibility for the religious instruction given them—a responsibility which we cannot hand over to a mixed body of managers, composed of persons not necessarily Churchmen at all, and possibly some of them Dissenters. Ours is a spiritual authority, derived from Christ through His appointed channel, the Bishops, to whom alone we are responsible for its due exercise. We cannot, without sacrifice of principle, subject our teaching to a body of managers deriving authority simply from Parliament."

In spite of his definite views in regard to religious

education, always vigorously and uncompromisingly expressed, he was, in January, 1889, elected by his fellow-townsmen to a seat on the Plymouth School Board, where he did useful work until compelled by failing health and advancing years to resign his seat.

Not less was his interest in, and recognition of, the importance of Sunday schools. From the beginning of his work in Plymouth he made a strong point of having the children publicly catechised in church every Sunday—a practice which, though common enough now, was at that date generally neglected. “I feel more and more convinced,” he once said, “of the importance of this feature of work. In mission work I believe it is one of the essential conditions of success; but I think it is important in every parish, old or new. Many grown-up people, as well as children, learn more from one public catechising, well prepared, than from many sermons; and though it is, doubtless, a difficult task to catechise a church full of children, yet if pains are taken with this work, and it is persevered in, the result in the long run amply repays all the trouble. The present Bishop of Exeter (Dr. Temple) in one of his Pastoral Letters has drawn special attention to the importance of this work, and with his usual acumen has impressed on the clergy the necessity of bearing in mind that it should always take the form of a ‘public instruction,’ so that all persons present may be able to learn something, instead of having to listen to mere questions and answers, more or less correct, from children. The object is instruction, and not simply to find out what the children know.”

Another branch of spiritual work that early

engaged Prynne's attention, and in the development of which, as in so many other ways, he was a pioneer, was the formation of parochial guilds. Foremost among these was the Society of the Love of Jesus, which is, we believe, the oldest existing guild in the Church of England, and which still continues its useful career at St. Peter's, having also affiliated branches in other parts of England. It was founded by Prynne on December 23, 1861, and was originally intended by him to include men, women, and children, but is now limited to the female sex. The Society is divided into three classes or rules of graduated strictness. The First Rule consists of those who, under the attraction of God's grace, and from providential circumstances, are enabled to give themselves, their time and talents, more entirely to God's service than is provided for by the Second Rule. The latter is for regular Communicants of the Church of England who are desirous of living under some definite rule. The Third Rule is for children. Each rule has its distinct obligations. The object for which it was established was to help people to realize their duties and responsibilities as members of the Church by getting them to live by a definite rule of life, and also to help them to guard against special difficulties and temptations which meet them in their daily life. Though intended to embrace a wider sphere of influence than any particular parochial guild, this Society has been the model on which countless parochial guilds have since been organized. It is expressly stated in its rules that in every parish in which the Society is established, it is desirable that the priest of the parish should be Warden;

but when this is not possible, then, in any locality in which there are ten or more members, they shall select one of their number as Warden or sub-Superior, subject to the approval of the Superior; and in no case shall any parochial work be undertaken by the Society, as a society, without the knowledge and sanction of the priest of the parish. But no priest establishing the Society in his parish may alter the rules without the consent of the Superior, and all matters involving difficulty or dispute are to be referred to the Superior for final decision. For badge the Society has a floriated cross within the motto "*Charitas Christi urget nos*," and a heart lettered S. L. J.

Another guild that was founded by Prynne in the very early days of such institutions, and is still in existence, was the Guild of St. Agnes, founded in 1868. This organization originated in a great and pressing need which arose in connection with the mission district of the parish. Prynne thus described its purpose:—

"The children under instruction at the mission school were taken from the very lowest class of the population, and their homes were often so bad that there seemed to be nothing to save them from going altogether wrong as soon as they left school. The aim of the guild has ever been preventive work. We have striven to gain an influence over young girls who are exposed to very great temptations, and by care, instruction, sympathy, and advice, to save them from falling to that life of sin and misery into which so many

girls in these towns sink down. In this effort we believe God has blessed us. We can point to many cases in which, but for the care bestowed upon them through union with this guild, young girls would, as far as we can see, have gone altogether wrong. We can point to girls taken from the very homes of vice, and taught and cared for, now holding respectable positions in life and leading moral and religious lives. Prevention is better than cure; and important as penitentiary work is, preventive work is at least of equal importance and far more full of hope. To illustrate the class of life from which some of the members are taken, I may name the following incident: One day I was asked by the lady who was superintending the work of the guild whether or not I would admit 'fairies.' 'Fairies,' I replied, 'what do you mean?' 'A number of our girls,' she said, 'are called fairies by their friends and companions because they are being trained to dance and act in the Christmas pantomime, and some of these wish to be admitted into the guild.' 'Oh, by all means!' said I. 'Let us get all the fairies we can into the guild. It will give us the opportunity of giving them a little more Christian instruction and training than they would otherwise be likely to get.' And so the fairies were admitted."

Guilds for men (St. Peter), boys, and married women (St. Anne), were subsequently started, the rules of the latter including such practical points as these:—

"To endeavour to make home clean, orderly, and comfortable.

"To be kind to friends and neighbours in trouble; to try and prevent young people from getting into bad ways, and to persuade them to forsake sin, and to attend church.

" FOR MOTHERS.

"To have their children baptized early.

"To keep them clean and tidy, and to see that they are strictly modest in all their ways.

"To send them to a Church Sunday-school, and if possible to a Church day-school.

In the guild rules it is significant to note one, the observance of which was stringently insisted on by Prynne, viz., the rule that members must worship only in the Church of England. Throughout his long life Prynne's view of the Roman position in this country knew no change, and was characterised by no hesitancy or shadow of doubt. Realizing more fully than many the essential Catholicity of the Anglican Communion, he regarded attendance at Roman Catholic services in England as an act of schism, with the perpetration of which he had no sympathy. That some priests should hold contrary views on a matter which he regarded as vital, was to him a cause of considerable misgiving and uneasiness, to which he gave emphatic expression toward the close of his days.

In the various organizations of which we have spoken, Prynne was, of course, only establishing a

work with which Churchmen to-day are very familiar: but at the time that he initiated them they were, be it remembered, entirely novel experiments, and as such were regarded by many, even within the Church, with distrust and suspicion. Of guilds, as of Sisterhoods, many people were, to quote the late Archbishop Benson, afraid, because Rome had once touched them. The spell of Rome was over us, and a great many saw, or thought they saw, Popery in everything that Rome had ever touched. In the elaborate development of the Church's parochial work with which we are familiar to-day, do we not sometimes forget how completely lacking it all was sixty years ago, and how much we owe to those who, like Prynne, were the pioneers of a new and better condition of things?

All through the period with which we are dealing, Prynne was in close touch with the more prominent exponents of the Catholic Revival, enjoying the personal friendship of Mr. Bennett, of Frome; Archdeacon Froude; Archdeacon Denison; T. T. Carter, of Clewer; Dr. Woodford, afterwards Bishop of Ely, with whom Prynne had worked at Clifton; Father Lowder, Father Mackonochie, and other well-known priests. In 1856 he was a preacher at one of the famous Dedication Festivals of St. John's, Frome Selwood; others assisting on this occasion being Dr. Pusey, Dr. Woodford, Mr. Keble, Mr. Upton Richards, and Archdeacon Denison. This festival marked the completion of the restoration of the chancel at Frome Church, in memory of Bishop Ken, whose body lies beneath its walls. A few years later, at the invitation of Bishop Philpotts, he preached in St. Andrew's, Plymouth, at the episcopal visitation,

when, so great was the excitement, that his friends felt it advisable to form a body-guard for the preacher from the chancel to the pulpit. At the conclusion of the sermon, the Bishop stood forward and publicly thanked Prynne for his words on that occasion.

During 1859 Prynne's health broke down, and he was visited with one of those distressing illnesses which, subsequently, overtook him from time to time, incapacitating him for work. His splendid constitution, however, pulled him through on this as on many later occasions, when his recovery again and again seemed hopeless. Fortunately, even at this early date, he was assisted in his self-denying labours by an able band of assistant priests and parish workers. His spiritual influence was at all times proved to a remarkable degree by the capable body of fellow-workers, clerical and lay, that he was able to attract, and the personal enthusiasm and devotion which his lovable character seldom failed to elicit. We have already referred to Mr. Hetling's splendid work during the eventful period of the cholera visitation, and of his successor's able assistance throughout the trying period of the Episcopal Enquiry. Another assistant in Prynne's ministry at this time—1853-56—was the Rev. Charles Coombes, who eventually, on his vicar's recommendation, was appointed to the incumbency of St. John's, Sutton-on-Plym, in which district his long and earnest work is still gratefully remembered. The Rev. W. G. Abbott, subsequently Rector of St. Luke's, Old Street, E.C., did his earliest clerical work at St. Peter's, assisting Prynne, first as deacon, then as priest, from 1856 to 1859. Another of Prynne's fellow-labourers

about this time was the Rev. J. Leycester Lyne, who has since become widely known as "Father Ignatius of Llanthony." This remarkable person—he was at the time just twenty-three years of age—had been admitted to the Diaconate on December 23, 1860, the Bishop of Exeter imposing a condition that he should not preach in the Diocese of Exeter for three years—that is to say, until he was admitted to the Priesthood. Prynn—wrongly described as "Canon Prynn" in the recently published "Life of Father Ignatius, O.S.B."—desirous of helping one who had already identified himself with the Catholic Movement, offered the young deacon an honorary curacy at St. Peter's, where the Rev. G. Mason was at that time working. Prynn in after years used often to speak of Mr. Lyne's brief association with him, particularly dwelling on the young deacon's warm love of the very poorest people, among whom his work lay. Writing to Mrs. Lyne thirty years ago, his former vicar observed of her son, "He was animated with a very true spirit of devotion and zeal in carrying out such work as was assigned him; and his earnest and loving character largely won the affections of those among whom he ministered." According to Mr. Lyne's biographer, the Baroness de Bertouch, "his experiences as a curate at Plymouth are inclusive of two important biographical landmarks—*i.e.* the manifestation of 'the supernatural' in his own person, and the formation of lifelong friendships with two central figures in modern Church history."¹ As regards the former "landmark," it is perhaps

¹ "The Life of Father Ignatius, O.S.B." By the Baroness de Bertouch (Methuen and Co.). Page 81.

permissible to observe that Prynne, in his reminiscences of Mr. Lyne's work, made no reference to the power of working miracles with which that gentleman has lately been associated. The "fence of reticence," so wisely suggested by Dr. Pusey, has proved so effectual that the "Egg or Hatch" incident and the "Plymouth idyll" might never have occurred for all the memory of them that exists locally. The "famous silence" has indeed enveloped these surprising manifestations most effectually. The story of Mr. Lyne's acquaintance with Miss Sellon—in whom he found a kindred spirit—and that lady's loan to him of a Community House, has been told by his biographer. These events and Mr. Lyne's very severe illness, speedily terminated the young deacon's brief association with St. Peter's, Plymouth. The roll of Prynne's clerical helpers since that date has included men whose good work for the Catholic faith is beyond question, notable among them all being the late Rev. R. H. Fison, the memory of whose saintly life and devoted ministry at the Mission Chapel of the Good Shepherd—1885-1891—is one of the treasured possessions of the Church in that district. Another of Prynne's most valued colleagues during more than ten years, was the Rev. Arthur Preedy, who left St. Peter's in 1895 for the Vicarage of Saltash, to which he was preferred by the Bishop of Truro, Dr. Gott. The Very Rev. Dean Blakiston; the Rev. W. J. Scott, of Sunbury; the Rev. R. J. Bond, of Ashburton; and the Rev. J. Frampton, of Ascot Priory, among other well-known priests, also worked at St. Peter's at various periods of their careers.

Prynne was among the first of the English clergy

to use missions as a special means of influencing the souls committed to his care. One of the earliest of such missions took place in 1865, lasting eight days, the missionaries being two well-known London priests, Father Mackonochie, of St. Alban's, Holborn; and the Rev. G. Akers, of St. George's-in-the-East. The scheme of this mission was remarkably exhaustive, the subjects of the various addresses covering nearly all the great doctrines of the Christian faith. In 1870 Father Lowder was one of the mission priests in a notable mission at St. Peter's, Plymouth, with which parish he was at that time connected as one of the patrons. Several years earlier Prynne had drawn up and printed a service for Church Missions, and from time to time he conducted missions in various parts of England, when able to get away from the duties of his own cure. At the great London Mission of 1874, he was one of the missionaries at St. Matthias, Stoke Newington; and he was wont in after years to recall the death of the famous layman, Robert Brett, which took place during the mission, "making," he used to say, "a vastly deeper impression than any poor words of mine." In the Three Towns' Mission of 1877 Canon Bodington and the Rev. W. J. Frere, of Wolverhampton, were at St. Peter's, the preparation in which parish was carried out with a thoroughness and care which went far to secure the full benefit of this great spiritual effort. Prynne's Pastoral Letters to his people on special occasions like these always breathed a spirit of loving solicitude for the souls committed to his keeping, together with an admirable presentation of the Church's evangelistic message to the world. The following extract from a Lenten Pastoral of the

year 1866 is typical of the manner in which he commended the Message of Salvation to those in whose hearts the flame of love was yet unkindled :—

“In God’s spiritual Zion—His Holy Catholic Church—there is a ‘Fountain open for sin and for all uncleanness.’ *All* sinners truly repenting of their sins, and going to that all-cleansing flood in living faith, may find pardon and forgiveness. That Fountain is the Precious Blood of our Incarnate Saviour. More powerful than the pool of Siloam, which was gifted with virtue from on high to heal the diseases of the body, *this Fountain* open for all in the Church of God, has power to heal the diseases of the soul. It is free to all—all may come to this Fountain and wash and be clean. Yes, ‘though your sins be as scarlet,’ plunged in this Fountain they may be made ‘as white as snow:’ ‘though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.’

“ ‘There is a Fountain filled with Blood,
Drawn from Immanuel’s veins,
And sinners plung’d beneath that flood
Lose all their guilty stains.’

“Nor are you left to yourselves and your own unaided efforts to discover whether or not you are in a fit state to receive and profit by this cleansing grace. God has, in His wisdom and mercy, seen fit to appoint over you chosen men, whose special duty it is to instruct and guide you in the ways of salvation, and to exercise on your behalf the ministry of reconciliation. You cannot, therefore, truly say, ‘I have no place to flee unto,

and no man careth for my soul.' We, your clergy, who are set over you in the Lord, *do* care for your souls. We *wish* to instruct you, to comfort you, and to help you on your heavenward journey; but we cannot do this for you if you keep away from us. We cannot aid you if you keep away from church, and refuse to accept our ministrations. You do this, it may be, because you are quite careless about your soul; if so, do consider what I have said. It may be, you avoid us as your ministers, because you have been told wrong things about us, and heard us called hard names, and have been led to believe that we do not preach the Gospel—the truth as it is in Jesus. But would it not be wise in you to try and find out for yourselves whether such reports of us are correct or not? Is it not unwise to allow yourselves to be led away from your appointed ministers, without at least taking care to find out the truth? You *may* be losing the very medicine designed by God for the healing of your souls by forsaking our ministrations; therefore, take care that you do not thus act without some serious thought and enquiry.

"The theme—the sum and substance of our preaching and teaching, is 'Jesus Christ, and Him crucified.' This you may find out, if you try to do so. Many *have* found it out, who were once prejudiced against us, as you, perhaps, are now. During this Holy Season of Lent we shall give you more frequent opportunities of instruction than usual. And, oh, dear brethren! may God, in His great mercy, dispose your

hearts to make use of the means and opportunities of grace, which we, as His ambassadors, give you. May we be enabled so to speak, and you so to hear, that your souls may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus."

These words, written forty years ago, were typical of Prynne's preaching and teaching throughout the whole of his life—teaching the transparent simplicity and deep earnestness of which carried with it intense conviction of the yearning love of souls that prompted the message.

CHAPTER X

Generous benefactors of St. Peter's—The new church—Explanatory document—Consecration of St. Peter's (1882)—Some of Prynne's characteristics—Presentation and address (1884)—Proctorship to Convocation—Transference of parochial patronage to Keble College—The incumbency of All Saints'—Prynne's theological position on disputed points.

TURNING from the spiritual to the material development of St. Peter's Church, it was not until 1882 that the old chapel, after having served as a church for more than thirty years, was replaced by a new and more beautiful building, the erection of which Prynne had so long and eagerly anticipated. It was chiefly by the liberality of members of the Middleton family, and notably of two sisters, Mary Ann and Eliza Middleton, that the church was built. The two ladies named gave a sum of £6000 during 1878 for the rebuilding of the nave, the brother and surviving sister contributing a further memorial gift of £1000 in the following year. Not only in the connection here noted did the assistance of the Misses Middleton mean much to St. Peter's. These good women, and notably Miss Mary Middleton, generously aided every work for the good of the parish, contributing lavishly of their money, and, as long as health permitted, labouring personally and unceasingly in countless ways. The increased endowment of St. Peter's was

largely provided by these ladies ; and of Miss Mary Middleton, whose death at the age of eighty occurred during the present year, Prynne has himself said that, humanly speaking, but for her it would have been quite impossible for him to have carried on the work of the parish with anything like the same result. The completed Church of St. Peter's, largely due to her continuing generosity, will to some extent form a visible memorial of this good woman's long and valuable association with the parish.

Plans for the new church were drawn by the Vicar's second son, Mr. George Fellowes Prynne, F.R.I.B.A., who has since become famous in his profession, designing many churches and restoring others in London and the provinces. The foundation-stone of the new building was laid on the Thursday in Easter Week, April 1, 1880, by the Earl of Devon, in the presence of a large number of the clergy of the neighbourhood and members of the congregation. The following paper, explanatory of the history of the building, was placed under the stone :—

“To the Holy, Eternal, and Undivided Trinity ; this Foundation Stone was laid by William Reginald Courtenay, eleventh Earl of Devon, on April 1st, 1880, in the thirty-second year of the Incumbency of the Rev. George Rundle Prynne, M.A., Vicar, Thomas Merrett Vicary and Samuel Tallin being Churchwardens. The Architect was George Fellowes Prynne, second son of the Vicar, and the Builder, Alfred Guy, of London. The present church stands on the site of an older building, which was begun A.D. 1828, and

Consecrated on October 5, 1850. In A.D. 1878 a sum of £6000 was given by Mary Ann Ochterlony Middleton and Eliza Mary Middleton for rebuilding the nave of the church, and in A.D. 1879 a further sum of £1000 was given by the Rev. Henry Ochterlony Middleton and Mary Ann Ochterlony Middleton for the erection of a Memorial Chapel in the south aisle to their Sister, Eliza Mary Middleton, who died on the 31st of December, A.D. 1878. The remaining portion of the money necessary for building the church was given by many contributors of small amounts.

"The Daily Celebration of the Holy Eucharist was restored in this church on Ash Wednesday, A.D. 1851, and has been continued in this parish to the date of laying this stone.

"It is the earnest prayer of those who have offered of their substance for the building of this church that the Holy Oblation instituted by Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ may be daily offered here for generations to come, to God's greater glory and the good of His people."

This document, recording as it does the greatest restoration of the Catholic Revival, namely, that of the Daily Eucharist, is, we suppose, unique in character, which fact justifies its reproduction in these pages.

The new church—lacking its tower, funds for which were not available—was consecrated on February 1, 1882, the occasion being one of the most notable in the whole of Prynne's long ministry. The whole building was new, with the exception of the



ST. PETER'S, PLYMOUTH, SHOWING THE PRYNNE MEMORIAL.

(From a Photograph by A. P. Steer of Plymouth.)

[To face page 154.]

sacrarium and vestries, the former of which was the chancel of the old St. Peter's, and had been designed by Mr. George Street in 1850. The new church, at the date of its consecration, had cost about £12,000, and in it Mr. G. Fellowes Prynne has provided a dignified and beautiful addition to the churches of the Three Towns. Dr. Temple, then Bishop of Exeter, consecrated the church, and preached a sermon which, as Prynne afterwards observed, "was fully in accord with what I have been teaching in St. Peter's Church for so many years past." "Abide in Me and I in you" was the Bishop's text, and upon these words he founded such definite instruction regarding sacramental union with Christ in His Church as harmonized well with the preaching and teaching for which St. Peter's has always stood. At the choral celebration on this occasion, Archdeacon Wilkinson, Vicar of St. Andrew's, Plymouth, read the Epistle, and Archdeacon Earle—subsequently Bishop of Marlborough, and now Dean of Exeter—read the Gospel. The service was followed by a luncheon, at which the Bishop, many of his brother clergy, and notable laymen, vied with each other in demonstrating their love and respect for Prynne in this moment of supreme happiness. The Bishop, in proposing "The health of the Vicar of St. Peter's," observed that if the vicar had not been what he was, St. Peter's would not have been there that day. It would be for ever a visible testimony to the way in which Mr. Prynne had won the hearts of a great many of his people, by a kind of labour which could not be made visible to the eye in any other way—a very large part of it must be quite incapable of being

measured by any human measure, and was in reality visible to God alone—but a labour of love which had gone on for many years, and which, he made bold to say, would accompany the vicar as long as he was known. In responding to the Bishop's words, Prynne spoke of the "great sunshine" of that day with joy, and added that, whatever feeling might have been engendered from opposing principles in that place of Plymouth, he did not know that in all the world he had one personal enemy.

This statement, as to the accuracy of which there can be no doubt, sufficiently indicates the change that had taken place during the thirty-four years of Prynne's incumbency. Things which in those earlier days, with which much of this biography has been concerned, would have provoked riots and uproar, were now taken as a matter of course. Already it was hard to believe the story of the storms that had been raised by preaching in a surplice, wearing a coloured stole, using a coloured altar frontal, or collecting the offerings of the people in an alms bag. The fighting was not all over—as subsequent events have proved—but pioneers like Prynne had borne the first and fiercest onslaught of attack, and had successfully vindicated the Church's right to her own possession in matters of doctrine and ceremonial. And in all the fighting, Prynne had lived a life of unobtrusive piety and goodness, never in the most heated days of controversy permitting himself to use an unkind word or cherish an unkind thought in regard to any one of those who ranged themselves in opposition to him. This power of complete self-control was ever one of the most striking

of Prynne's characteristics. Those who knew him slightly were sometimes hardly able to realize the intensity of feeling which lay beneath his placidity of manner and gentleness of speech. These latter characteristics were the result of tremendous self-discipline and control, exercised without wavering throughout the whole of his long life, and often in moments of severest trial. As one who was much with him has remarked, "Many a time I have seen him turn pale with suppressed emotion or indignation; yet he never uttered an angry word, and when he did speak it was generally quite calmly."

The consecration of the new St. Peter's was the crowning-point and the outcome of Prynne's ministry in Plymouth. From that time, and throughout the remainder of his life in their midst, his townsmen united in honouring him, and by every means in their power testifying to the regard and esteem in which they held him. The feelings to which we allude found warm and practical expression in October, 1884, when Prynne was presented with an address and a cheque for four hundred guineas, in recognition of his devotion and self-sacrifice as Vicar of St. Peter's parish for thirty-six years. The Earl of Devon, Lord Halifax, Canon Body, and many other well-known Churchmen were associated with the presentation, which, as Mr. John Shelly observed in making it, was intended to show that the deep appreciation of Prynne's work, and deep personal affection for him, were by no means confined to his own congregation and parish, but extended throughout the Church of England. The address presented on this occasion recalled the difficulties with which Prynne's early

work in Plymouth had been surrounded, and went on to recognize the blessings with which that work had been attended, recording such results as "the erection of churches, schools and mission-rooms, the formation of a new parish, the establishment of numerous guilds and societies, the provision of frequent services, and, above all, of a daily celebration of the Holy Communion, and the gathering in of a large and earnest body of communicants." Much, it was remarked, that is generally accepted as part of the ordinary machinery of a well-organized parish was first originated and carried on by Prynne in the midst of difficulty and opposition, and for this, as well as for the writings with which he had advocated Church principles, Churchmen in every part of the country were grateful. In expressing his thanks on this occasion, Prynne made interesting reference to his work, stating incidentally that, in one way or another, he had raised £32,000, and spent it upon the parish during his incumbency, this amount being exclusive of the money received from the Additional Curates' Society, or the collections in church. Speaking of the institution of the Daily Eucharist, he said he did not set it up because he thought it was a nice thing to do. It was forced upon him by the providence of God. In 1849, when the cholera was raging so violently in Plymouth, the Sisters who went in and out amongst the sick, asked him whether, as they held their lives in their hands from day to day, he would give them an opportunity of communicating daily before they went forth to their work. He felt he could not refuse, and that was the beginning of the setting up of the Daily Eucharist.

A great blessing had thereby resulted from what appeared to be a terrible scourge, and St. Peter's was the first church in the land, so far as he knew, to set up the Daily Eucharist.

Prynne, like Lowder, Keble, Neale, and many another good and holy man, never received honour or reward from the authorities of the Church. It is a little strange that this should have been the case to the end of his days, for in his latter years, at any rate, it is evident that by successive Diocesans of Exeter he was highly esteemed. Again and again he received from his bishops expressions of affection and warm admiration, and these he treasured deeply. But though the reward of title and place was withheld from him by the ecclesiastical authorities, Prynne received from his brother clergy in the diocese perhaps the highest mark of confidence and esteem they could give him. This was in 1885, when, in a contested election, he was returned to Convocation as Proctor for the parochial clergy of the diocese, in conjunction with the late Rev. Prebendary Sadler. Three candidates were nominated, each representative of one of the three schools of thought in the Church ; in the result Prynne received a larger number of votes (165) than the Moderate and Low Church candidates combined. He held his position until the dissolution of 1892, and never ceased to regard with pardonable pride the signal honour which, as he conceived, his clerical brethren had done him. Writing to the author of this biography in 1899, seven years after his retirement from Convocation, he says—

“I cannot feel, as people often say, that I

have never been honoured by the Church, even above my deserts. I do not think any private priest could receive a greater honour than to be elected, as I was in 1885, in a contested election, by an overwhelming majority, to represent the parochial clergy of the diocese in Convocation."

The humility and self-effacement of the writer are conspicuous in the above words. While dealing with this matter, we may add that some seven years before his death Prynnne received the offer of a small country living in Cornwall from the Bishop of Truro, Dr. Gott. Although advancing age precluded his acceptance of the offer, Prynnne was deeply touched with the feeling that led to its being made, and the loving expression of admiration and esteem with which it was accompanied.

As his incumbency of St. Peter's grew longer, Prynnne began to consider how the future of the parish could best be safeguarded, and the continuity of the teaching for which it so conspicuously stood be preserved. In its earliest days, as a district under the Peel Act, the appointment to St. Peter's was vested in Crown and Bishop alternately. By increasing the slender endowment of the parish, Prynnne had secured the appointment of a body of trustees, including Dr. Liddon, Canon T. T. Carter, the Hon. C. L. Wood (Lord Halifax), the Rev. A. H. Mackonochie, and Colonel Roberts. The trust deed under which these gentlemen were empowered to appoint laid down several conditions, *e.g.* that any future incumbent should be a celibate; that he should wear the Eucharistic Vestments, use the Eucharistic

Lights, etc. After the establishment of Keble College, however, Prynne desired that the advowson of St. Peter's should be placed in the hands of the Keble trustees, and the consent of the private trustees was eventually given to this plan, though not without some very apparent misgivings on the part of Father Mackonochie, who could see no sort of guarantee that Keble "would necessarily remain Catholic for, say, fifty years," by which time he hoped disestablishment would do away with "patronage" altogether. As was pointed out by more than one of the trustees, everything depended upon the constitution of Keble College Council for the time being, and this, of course, was bound to be a variable quality. The transference to Keble College was accomplished in 1884. The special conditions of which we have spoken were at that date removed from the trust deed, as being impossible of enforcement, though there seems to have been an understanding that the purport of them should in future be regarded as the wishes of those who secured the patronage for the Catholic party.

More than once during the closing years of his life, Prynne experienced considerable anxiety as to the future of St. Peter's and of the daughter church of All Saints'. The patronage of the latter parish was, and is, vested in trustees, the Vicar of St. Peter's having surrendered his right to the appointment at the wish of Dr. Temple, who was Bishop of Exeter when All Saints' was created. Upon the resignation of the Rev. C. R. Chase in 1898, special anxiety was felt as to the appointment of his successor in the Vicarage of All Saints', and at this moment his co-trustees turned with concern to Prynne, who, in a letter

to one of them, thus summarized his views. Writing on October 7, 1898, he observed:—

“I will say, in the first place, that I would never support any one for a cure of souls who was not loyal to the faith and principles of the Church of England, as set forth in the Book of Common Prayer.”

He then proceeds to speak of some special points that had been raised in connection with the appointment:—

“1.—I regard special confession to a priest as quite a voluntary act on the part of the laity, and, therefore, not absolutely necessary for the forgiveness of sins. I have never made it a necessary condition, either for Confirmation or Holy Communion, or sanctioned its being made so. It is free to all, but its use is to be governed by each one's own convictions of its helpfulness to his spiritual life.

“2.—I have never held or taught that the outward and visible Eucharistic elements are to be adored, but He alone Who is spiritually and invisibly present under these outward veils, or, as one of the Homilies expresses it, ‘under the forms of bread and wine.’

“3.—Reservation for the sick is without any doubt a primitive practice, and has been allowed by some of our bishops, in times of great prevailing sickness—*e.g.* when cholera was raging in London. In a parish such as mine, consisting of 12,000 people, most of whom are in extreme

poverty, emergent cases are constantly arising; and people taken suddenly ill who have desired Communion have from time to time died without it, because there was not time to make arrangements for celebrating Holy Communion in their rooms. Then the rooms themselves are commonly so very unfit for such a sacred purpose—possibly only a mattress on the floor, on which the patient is lying, and a few broken chairs and bits of furniture about the room. We have frequently to communicate three or four sick persons in one day. Our practice is to reserve from our daily Celebration at the church enough to communicate such persons, which appears to us far more reverent than to celebrate afresh in each case in such places.

“3.—Adoration is due to God alone. Though I am anxious to give to the Blessed Virgin Mary all due honour as the Mother of our Lord, yet I quite disapprove of the extravagant terms in which she is addressed in Romish books of devotion.

“4.—Fasting Communion. Though a rule of the Church, derived from the earliest ages, and recommended as an act of reverence by some of our greatest English bishops, yet it is not a matter of absolute necessity, and may be dispensed with on sufficient grounds. For example, though my own rule is to receive fasting, yet, when I was very ill, I did not hesitate to receive in the morning, after taking food through the night. I should certainly never be more strict with others in a matter of this kind than with myself.

"We are all, I suppose, influenced to a greater degree than we think by the persons and circumstances with which we have been brought into contact in our early lives. From a very early part of my ministerial career I was brought into contact with some of the great leaders of the so-called Oxford Movement, and embraced the main principles which they taught."

The writer concludes with an expression of the strong personal feeling he entertains in connection with an appointment to a parish taken out of his own, and the patronage of which he only surrendered at his Bishop's request. The letter, from which we have quoted at length, establishes with considerable clearness Prynne's position less than five years before his death in regard to several disputed points. Those who knew him most intimately will best know the scrupulous care with which, even in his mortal illness, he endeavoured to keep the Church's rule in regard to fasting before Communion. The testimony of one of his closest friends, who was also his medical adviser, Mr. Paul Swain, F.R.C.S., of Plymouth, is given elsewhere upon this point. Speaking to the members of the Confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament at their annual gathering in June, 1903, Mr. Swain in touching words told how when Prynne was on his death-bed, only a few days before he died, he felt it best, as his medical adviser, to tell the aged priest that he might not be spared to see the morning. When it was suggested that he should without delay make his last Communion, his distress at having to make an exception from his life-long practice was very evident. "My

dear Swain," he said, "I have had my food, I cannot receive the Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ." So strong was his sense of the Church's law on this point, that even in these last days of pain and weakness he hesitated to break the rule he had so long and faithfully observed. As to the Reservation of the Blessed Sacrament for the sick and dying, the experience of his own parish, especially toward the end of his ministry, impressed the necessity of such provision upon his mind very deeply; indeed before Reservation was adopted at St. Peter's, the clergy of that parish had very frequently to obtain the Blessed Sacrament from the neighbouring church of All Saints', where Reservation obtained some years earlier than in the church of the mother parish. Of the other points mentioned by Prynne in his communication to a co-trustee, his position in regard to the Sacrament of Penance was made clear in an earlier chapter of this book; and his teaching concerning the doctrine of the Holy Eucharist will be more fully considered later on.

The Vicarage of All Saints', Plymouth, was eventually, in October, 1898, offered to the Rev. H. H. Leeper, who at that time had been working at St. Peter's as one of the assistant clergy for more than eleven years. On its being declined by Mr. Leeper, the living was filled by the appointment of the Rev. Owen Anwyl, a former curate of All Saints', and subsequently priest-in-charge of St. Alban's, Ventnor. In justice to Mr. Leeper, for whom a sphere like that of the All Saints' district had many special attractions, it should be clearly stated that his refusal of the incumbency was, in some measure,

prompted by a desire to spare his aged Vicar the unavoidable worry and distress which his withdrawal from St. Peter's at that moment would have caused. Prynné shared this desire, and reciprocated the feeling of affection which prompted it; indeed at this time he expressed the wish that Mr. Leeper might eventually succeed him in the incumbency of the church and parish upon which he had bestowed his valuable services for so many years. This wish Prynné made known to those most nearly concerned, and, considering the special circumstances of the case, there can be little doubt that its fulfilment would have been attained, had not the ecclesiastical events of 1899, and the part that Prynné felt bound to take in regard to them, led to Mr. Leeper's resignation and final withdrawal from St. Peter's parish.

CHAPTER XI

Prynne's relations with his diocesans—The Lambeth Opinion of 1899—Perplexing alternatives—Correspondence with Bishop Bickersteth—Discontinuance of the liturgical use of incense in response to the Bishop's "godly admonition"—Resignation of the Rev. H. H. Leeper—Communicants' memorial to the Bishop—Restoration of incense and introduction of Reservation—Prynne on the evil of internal divisions.

THE events briefly referred to in the preceding chapter arose out of the Archbishop's opinion regarding Reservation and the liturgical use of incense—an opinion which Bishop Bickersteth, like so many other prelates, endeavoured to impose upon his diocese of Exeter. In the earliest days of his incumbency, and in the midst of the bitterest persecution he ever experienced, Prynne, as we have seen, had the support of his Bishop. The value of this support cannot be over-estimated. Dr. Philpotts was succeeded in the Bishopric of Exeter by Dr. Temple, by whom also Prynne and his work were very highly esteemed. With many other clergy of the diocese Prynne opposed Dr. Temple's appointment, but when that appointment was finally made, his first act on the Bishop's coming to Exeter, was to call at the Palace and tell the Bishop that he had felt bound to oppose his appointment, and to state his reasons for doing so. Bishop Temple, just in himself, appreciated

those men who were real workers. He received Prynne most kindly, and told him that from what he had heard of his work, he felt sure they would soon be friends, and that they would work harmoniously together. Dr. Temple, as has been said, was always friendly to Prynne, although, of course, not altogether in sympathy with the kind of services held at St. Peter's. When the plans for the rebuilding of the nave and the addition of a side chapel came before the Bishop for signature, for the purposes of the faculty, on the plans and every drawing showing the chapel, or any portion of it, he crossed the same through with his pen and wrote, "Disapproved, Exon." A far more liberal spirit was shown a few years later, when he consecrated many churches with side chapels and second altars, showing that even the strongest of bishops can sometimes be progressive in their views. Indeed it is the strongest man that is most likely to be progressive.

While recognizing in the Vicar of St. Peter's a stalwart Catholic, Dr. Temple admired him for his saintliness and devotion of life, frequently expressing that feeling in private as well as in public. In 1878 he discussed with Prynne the position of the Society of the Holy Cross, of which organization Prynne was one of the early members, having joined in 1860. Dr. Temple made it very clear that while he objected to the Society as it then stood—this was the moment when public attention had been excited in consequence of statements made about "The Priest in Absolution"—he nevertheless entertained a very kindly feeling for many of its members, whom he describes as "truly excellent and holy men." "I wish," he adds,

"I could help them by any encouragement that I could give. They have my deepest sympathy in their spiritual life—but I do wish they would make a new society." This was in 1878. A few years later Prynné consulted Dr. Temple with regard to the service at the Consecration of St. Peter's, and in reply the Bishop thus stated his own position on certain points:—

"Exeter, January 30, 1882.

"MY DEAR SIR,

"I have no objection to the Kyrie, the Creed, the Sanctus, and the Gloria in Excelsis being sung in the Communion Office on Wednesday. I wish very much that I could myself intone the proper parts of the service. But I hope those of your singers who have been confirmed will be partakers of the Holy Communion with the rest.

"I am always desirous of conforming to the wishes of the clergy when I can do so without breach of law. But it is settled, and in my judgment rightly settled, that the position of the celebrant at the beginning of the Communion Office is at the north side, and not before the altar, and that the position during the Prayer of Consecration must be such that the bread may be broken before the people. I know that some of the clergy profess to be able to stand eastward and yet break the bread before the people; but I have never been able to do it, nor have I ever seen it done.

"The breaking of the bread before the people

is a really important thing if the manual acts are not to be degraded. For it is the principle of all our services that the people should take their part, and there is precisely the same reason why they should see the manual acts as why they should hear the words of Consecration. To be consistent, if the one be hidden, the other should be whispered, or be said in Latin or in Hebrew.

"I feel bound to add that though I always do my utmost to conform to the wishes of the clergy, I think it ill for the Church that there should be this inversion of the natural order.

"Yours faithfully,

"F. EXON."

A few days after writing the above letter Dr. Temple consecrated St. Peter's Church—"the visible proof," as he observed, "of the effect that Mr. Prynne had produced,"—granting the priests and people of the parish a dispensation from observing the Vigil of the Purification on this their day of festival, and sharing to the full in their joy on that happy occasion. More than a year later, in December, 1883, Dr. Temple wrote Prynne, expressing his profound sense of the danger involved in the proposal to legalize marriage with a deceased wife's sister. "Nothing," he said, "can be more disastrous to the morality of a nation than the lowering of the sanctity of domestic life and of the marriage bond. . . . I pray that we may have God's aid to avert the evil that appears to be imminent."

In defence of such vital principles Prynne was ever most strenuous, for though he had no love of controversy, but rather regarded it with pain, he had (to

use his own words) been accustomed all through his life to stand to his guns, entirely regardless of fear or favour. Joining the English Church Union at the close of 1862, when that society, then in its infancy, was engaged in meeting Bishop Colenso's attacks on certain books of the Bible, Prynne remained an active and earnest member of the Union throughout his life, some of his last public speeches being delivered in its support. From 1874 to 1876 he was vice-chairman of the Plymouth branch, a position he again held from 1887 to the time of his death. He was also a Vice-President of Devon (South) District Union from 1899, and in this capacity delivered a very striking address to its members at Torquay in the summer of 1902. On that occasion, tracing the course of ecclesiastical events during the past sixty years, the veteran clergyman drew special attention to the "Erastian Heresy," which the Union had so long fought against—namely, that any mere secular Court, set up by Parliament, has any right to decide matters of faith or to regulate the worship of the Church in such matters as the Church by her rules, canons, and customs, has sanctioned. "To admit such a claim would, as it appears to me, be to dethrone Jesus Christ from the Sovereignty of His Own Church, and to set up a mere secular authority in His stead—an act, surely, of disloyalty to our Head; in short, an act of idolatry." Of the few honours that fell to him, few were more valued by this humble-minded priest than his election by the President and Council of the English Church Union to a Vice-Presidency of that body, which position he held from 1901 to the time of his death two years later. By the President of the

Union, Lord Halifax, Prynne was ever held in the highest esteem: on the occasion of the consecration of the new St. Peter's, that devoted layman, writing to express his regret at not being able to be present, observed :—

“I like to think of the happiness it must be to you to see your son's work finished, and to feel that all the long years of work at St. Peter's have been crowned with such a proof of God's blessing. It is not Plymouth only, but the whole Church of England, that owes you a deep debt of gratitude.”

Prynne's friendly relations with his diocesans continued and deepened under Dr. Bickersteth's occupancy of the See of Exeter. Differing, as they undoubtedly did, in their theological standpoints, the two men had many points in common. The deep spiritual earnestness, which was such a conspicuous feature of Dr. Bickersteth's character, enabled him to appreciate very highly the truly “evangelical” aspect of Prynne's life and teaching; while Prynne himself held in the utmost respect and esteem a diocesan whose piety and sanctity of life were worthy of the best traditions of the school to which he belonged. Both men, moreover, shared in the knowledge and love of the Church's hymnology, the stores of which they had enriched. Possessing mutual sympathies, and actuated by common love for their Divine Master, Whom both so faithfully served, it was inevitable that their relations toward each other should have been of the most affectionate nature. Bishop Bickersteth, thanking Prynne for a

volume of his sermons in 1889, thus expresses his feelings towards him :—

“I know that in some doctrines we do not see eye to eye. But I have for long, long years reckoned among my truest friends some whose doctrinal views differed from my own—their views and mine being, as I believe, within the wide embracing limits of our beloved Church—and, as I have often found on closer conference with them, being much nearer together than they or I had suspected. And ever since I came into the diocese, I have felt an affectionate veneration for your labours of love and faithful ministry. . . . I hope to read many more of your valuable sermons, and I venture to send you a very simple tractate of mine, the fruit of sermons I preached to my Hampstead flock, on the Holy Communion office. You will see in my words on the Prayer of Consecration of the Elements that I do intensely believe in the spiritual presence of our Lord in His Feast of Love.”

The spectacle of these two old Churchmen, the evangelical bishop and the aged priest, drawing closer and closer together, and seeking each to understand the other more completely and fully, is one of touching beauty. The recollection of it, moreover, may help to a better appreciation of the difficulties with which both men were confronted toward the close of Bishop Bickersteth's episcopate.

His intense veneration of the Holy Eucharist, which was to him the very sum and centre of Church

life on earth, early led Prynne to surround that great act of worship with every adjunct of Catholic ceremonial that he could command. The "Six Points" were adopted at St. Peter's very soon in its history, and of them all, perhaps none appealed more strongly to Prynne than the liturgical use of incense, with its beautiful symbolism of the great evangelical truth enshrined in the Sacrament of the Altar. Over and over again, with voice and pen, he taught the full meaning of the use of incense, than which, he was wont to maintain, no part of ceremonial had more of scriptural authority, or was more symbolical of high, holy, and truly evangelical truth. Upon the twofold grounds of scriptural precedent and primitive teaching, he never tired of justifying the retention and restoration in the Anglican Communion of this mark of her oneness with the whole Catholic Church. The Lambeth Opinion of 1899, with its condemnation of the liturgical use of incense in the services of the Church, occasioned the deepest distress to Prynne, who, in a little while, was called upon by his revered friend and bishop to relinquish those things which the Archbishops, relying on an obsolete Act of Uniformity, had seen fit to condemn.

Thus, at a time of life when the infirmities of age were pressing hard upon him, Prynne was confronted with two equally painful alternatives. On the one hand, his diocesan implored him, with all the fervour and earnestness at his command, to relinquish the use of the condemned ceremonial, and so to strengthen his bishop's hands in a moment of special difficulty and perplexity. On the other hand, Prynne was fully aware that by obeying his bishop's

"godly admonition," he would be pursuing a course that would inevitably cause him to be mistaken and forsaken by many friends, and this at a time when, humanly speaking, he could not afford to do without their help and support. The situation was indeed one of peculiar trial and difficulty, the consideration of which caused Prynné the acutest mental distress and anxiety. The already heavy responsibility which rested on him in the matter was further increased by the knowledge that if he decided to surrender the use of incense in compliance to his bishop's request, the Rev. H. H. Leeper, who had been his valued colleague for twelve years, would feel it his duty to resign the work he had so ably carried on. Enough has been said to show the gravity of the situation with which Prynné was face to face. The subjoined correspondence may perhaps be inserted here as showing the line of action which was eventually taken, and the principles which animated Prynné's conduct in this difficult matter:—

(1)

"The Palace, Exeter,
"September 20, 1899.

"MY DEAR MR. PRYNNE,

"I have heard that you are accustomed in St. Peter's Church to use liturgical incense and processional lights, and I feel it to be my solemn duty, as your father-in-God, to implore you not to use them henceforth.

"You have, I doubt not, read and pondered the decisions of the Archbishops of Canterbury and York as to the lawfulness of the liturgical

use of incense and the carrying of lights in procession. They decided that these usages were unlawful, and their closing words are such as must, I think, touch the hearts and consciences of all Churchmen. They say:

“‘We think it our duty to press, not only on the clergy that have appeared before us, but also on all the clergy alike, to submit to episcopal authority in all such matters as these. All alike have consented to the book of Common Prayer, and the book of Common Prayer requires all persons, not only if they doubt, but if they find that others disagree with them concerning the meaning of the directions contained in the book, to resort to the Bishop of the Diocese, who may, if he thinks meet, send the question to the Archbishop for his decision. In order to give the fullest opportunity to any who diversely take any question of this kind, to give reasons for their opinion, we have suspended our decision until we had heard the matter fully and learnedly argued before us, and we have now given our decision as the Prayer-book requires us to do. We entreat the clergy for the sake of the peace of the Church, which we all so much desire, to accept our decision thus conscientiously given, in the name of our common Master, the supreme Head of the Church, the Lord whose commission we bear.’

“My dear brother, I am the more anxious to beseech you, for Christ's sake, to submit to this decision of our Primate, in which I, your Bishop, fully concur, as your long and ripe experience

has influence over so many. I do not hide from myself that any change of ritual may be a source of grief to some members of your flock, but I am sure that any sacrifice you and they make in this act of obedience will have an abundant reward in the union which is binding our beloved Church more and more closely together. I entreat you to strengthen my hands by yielding to my earnest desire and submitting to my godly admonition.

“Ever yours most affectionately,

“E. H. EXON.”

(2)

“St. Peter's, Plymouth,

“October 20, 1899.

“MY DEAR LORD BISHOP,

“When I wrote to acknowledge the receipt of your Lordship's letter on the question of incense and processional lights, and to thank you for the kind and courteous way in which you had expressed your wishes on the subject, I said I would take the matter into my serious and prayerful consideration and then write you more fully. I must apologise for the delay which has occurred in my doing so, which I trust your Lordship will excuse in consideration of the grave difficulties in which your action on the Archbishops' pronouncement has placed me. For more than thirty years we have used incense in the Eucharistic office at St. Peter's Church, with the goodwill of the congregation, and without

any expressed disapproval on the part of the Bishop of the Diocese.

"I did not adopt this usage hastily when I came here: I waited twenty years before doing so, and did not then act before fully instructing my people on the subject and explaining the reasons of my action.

"I taught them that it was scriptural, having been originally ordered by God Himself—that it was not simply a part of Jewish ceremonial, but that it was prophesied of as an adjunct of worship in the Church of God when the Gentiles should flow into it, *e.g.* in Isa. xl., Mal. i., vii.—that its usage in the Divine Liturgy had prevailed in the Catholic Church from primitive times, and that its symbolical teaching was truly evangelical, signifying, not only prayer, but prayer saturated with the merits of Christ, which alone makes our prayers acceptable to God.

"On all these grounds I taught my people—that there was not and could not be anything superstitious in the use of incense, or anything distinctly popish. Even the Archbishops seem to admit all this, for they say, in the opinion which they have lately given, that the use of incense is not an evil thing or even an undesirable adjunct to Divine service, and that although, for the present, it is inadmissible in the Church of England, it may be again restored.

"My Lord, you have had experience of parochial work on a large scale before you were called to the Episcopal Office, and will be able therefore to understand and appreciate the pain

which it will give a congregation who have been thus taught, and who have accepted that teaching and have learnt to love and value the type of worship which we have set before them, to be deprived of what they so much value. They express the sense of desertion which they feel, after being so taught and led, at this deprivation, and we, their clergy, suffer with them in their difficulties.

“Your Lordship may reply, not unnaturally, that the interests of one parish, however united, is not to be considered where the interest and peace of the Church at large is concerned, and with this principle I quite agree.

“But, unhappily, I am unable to think that the enforcement of a rigid uniformity in details, certainly not condemned in the Prayer-book, will conduce to the best interests and peace of the Church. I think it will lead on to great excitement and unrest, if not, eventually, to disruption and disestablishment. I am not one who thinks or speaks lightly of these evils,—great evils in my judgment, and injurious in many ways to Church and nation, yet inevitable, if Parliament, and not the Church, has power to decree rites and ceremonies and authority in controversies of faith, for the *lex orandi* is also the *lex credendi*, and this is the corollary which Sir William Harcourt has, with much skill and force, drawn from the grounds on which the Archbishops gave their opinions: and their contentions, if accepted and acted upon by the authorities of the Church, seem to strike a fatal blow at her existence as

a living branch of Christ's Church—in short, to dethrone Christ from the sovereignty of His own kingdom and say, in effect, 'We will not have this man to reign over us.'

"I write strongly on this point because it seems to me the greatest danger we have to meet in the present, as it has often been in the past, in the Church of England—I mean the danger of allowing the British Parliament, composed as it is of men of all sorts of religions, and many, alas, of no religion at all, to regulate the faith and worship of that portion of Christ's One Church, of which we, my Lord, in our respective positions, are the ministers and guardians.

"Yet, although I cannot conscientiously accept the grounds on which the Archbishops give their opinion, or indeed the correctness of the opinion itself, or think that they are correct in applying the words in the preface to the Prayer-book to æcumenical customs of the Church, but which, as the Thirtieth Canon of 1603 says, 'doth with reverence retain these ceremonies which doth neither endanger the Church of God nor offend the minds of sober men,' yet the latter part of your letter seems to open to me a ground on which I can yield to your wishes, when you speak to me as my spiritual superior and my Father in God; and although I cannot say anything as to the future, yet, in the present emergency, and in fulfilment of my sincere wish, to submit to your Lordship's 'earnest wish and Godly admonition,' to the very utmost of my power, I yield to your Lordship's wish.

"I trust you will excuse my having spoken so freely and so frankly at a crisis which I now consider so grave for the future of the Church for whose interests I have laboured so long.

"I remain, my Lord,

"Yours respectfully and affectionately,

"G. R. PRYNNE."

(3)

"The Palace, Exeter,

"October 23, 1899.

"MY DEAR FRIEND,

"Your very kind answer which I received yesterday morning as I was starting for two confirmations at Sandford and Cheriton Fitzpayne, touched my very heart. I can fully enter into and understand your deep sympathy with your flock whom you have shepherded so long and tenderly, and I can only pray that our Heavenly Father will return to you and them an overflowing spiritual blessing for the sacrifice you have made in yielding to what I feel to be my Godly admonition.

"You and I are both of us so far advanced in life that it cannot be very long before we meet in our one Master's presence, and know even as we are known.

"Ever your grateful and affectionate

"father-in-God,

"E. H. EXON."

In submitting this correspondence to the press, Prynné thus addressed his friends and parishioners :—

"The subjoined correspondence will tell its

own tale ; but I wish to assure you that it has not been without the deepest and most prayerful consideration that I have made the sacrifice of giving up, for the present, the beautiful and symbolical use of incense in the liturgical offices of the Church.

“Whatever pain you may feel in the loss of a symbol which you have learnt to understand and love, and to which many of you have been so long accustomed, you may rest assured falls on me with double force, not only for my sake, but for yours.

“If, dear friends, it is a time of humiliation for the Church in losing some of the beautiful adjuncts of Divine service to which we have been accustomed ; let us also remember that such humiliation may have come upon us in just chastisement for our unhappy divisions, and for our remissness in carrying out the great home missionary work which lies all around us, and, must I not add, for our own personal failures in attaining that high standard of spiritual attainment of which all beauty in external worship should be the expression.

“Let us hope and pray that God will restore to us, in His own good time, all that is conducive to His glory and our own advancement in that spiritual life which can alone prepare us and make us meet to dwell with Him in the Church triumphant in heaven.”

The publication of the foregoing correspondence produced several results. The Rev. H. H. Leeper,

acting in accordance with his previously expressed intentions, immediately placed his resignation in the hands of his vicar, thus terminating an association with St. Peter's which had already extended over twelve years, and might, under other conditions, have been considerably lengthened. At this moment Prynne was the recipient of letters from far and near, not merely his own parishioners, but clergy and laity all over England writing to express the sympathy they felt for and with him in this moment of heavy trouble and distress. Some there were—and these for the most part his own people—who found themselves quite unable to realize Prynne's position at this juncture, and whose disappointment at what they termed his retrograde action found expression in deeds as well as words. By the majority of Catholics, however, it was felt that in the cruel strait in which he was placed this veteran priest had acted with entire self-effacement, sacrificing, for a time, that which he of all men held most dear in humble obedience to the "godly admonition" of the chief pastor of the diocese, on a point in regard to which, as Prynne conceived it, the Bishop had undoubted right to use his discretion.

His position in this matter, never clearly understood by some, was admirably stated in the pathetic and convincing words which he uttered from the pulpit of St. Peter's on the Sunday after making his decision, October 29, 1899. Having spoken of some of the conflicts and difficulties with which life is filled, and claimed the sympathy of his people in "the great trial and difficulty" with which he, their pastor, had been confronted, he continued :—

“The use of incense in Divine service is, I now say with all the emphasis I can speak, a scriptural, primitive, and Catholic custom in the Church of God, and full of truly beautiful and evangelical teaching. And asserting this, as I do, people say to me, ‘Why, then, do you give it up?’ and I think they have a right to an answer. It is not because I believe that its use is more unlawful in the Church to-day than it was when I first began it thirty years ago, or than it has been, at any time, during this period. . . . When at my ordination, the most solemn period of my life, the Bishop asked me this question: ‘Will you reverently obey your Ordinary, unto whom is committed the charge and government over you: following with a glad mind and will their godly admonitions and submitting yourselves to their godly judgments?’ my answer was: ‘I will do so, the Lord being my helper.’ Now, I need not be told that the Bishop is bound by the law of the Church as much as I am, and that he cannot rightly give orders which would contravene the laws of the Church, and that this promise which I have read to you, binds us to submit only to things lawful for him to enjoin. This is, of course, quite true. But this raises the question which has been torturing me for the last month; the question, whether or not, in connection with my vow and under present conditions, it was or was not my duty, for my own sake and for the good of the Church, to submit to the request and godly admonition of the Bishop in this particular instance; and I felt driven to the conclusion that,

as the use of incense, though an edifying custom of the Church, was not obligatory on any particular priest, or in any particular church, it was right, as well as wise, to yield to the Bishop's expressed wish and admonition in a matter which thus becomes one of discretion; and although I know, and feel most deeply, that I have run counter to the feelings of friends whom I respect and love, and who think that I have stretched the duty of submission beyond its just limits, yet I think that, on general as well as on personal grounds, it is well to show that we do most sincerely desire to obey those who are set over us in the Lord, whenever we can possibly do so with a safe conscience. I know there are some good and earnest men who take a different view of duty from my own, and God forbid that I should judge, much less condemn, them. To our own Master must we all stand or fall—that Master whom I must so soon meet face to face; but I do ask you to believe in the honesty of my own convictions, as I can do, in the case of those who differ from me.

“That I should be mistaken and forsaken by friends, among whom I have so long ministered and in very many cases loved and valued, must, as you can see, be a cause of deep sorrow to me and hangs as a dark cloud over the scene of my long ministry; but, if it is God's will that trouble and humiliation should come upon me at the close of my ministry as well as at the beginning, I can only say, ‘Be it so, O Lord.’ So many kind things have been said and written about me

of late, in connection with work which is now being done in this church, so far beyond my deserts, that this humiliation must be good for me, and therefore I say in all submission, 'Thy will, O Lord, be done.' When the sympathy, love, and help which we trust we have been ever ready to give to others, fails us in time of need, we can only do what we should counsel you to do under similar conditions—turn to Him who never fails to help and comfort those who trust in Him, and say, 'O be Thou our help in trouble ; for vain is the help of man.'"

Deep sympathy with, and sincere loyalty to, their Vicar in the line he felt compelled to take, was displayed by the people of St. Peter's, Plymouth,—or the large majority of them—at this trying moment. These feelings found expression in the following Memorial to the Bishop of Exeter, which was adopted by the communicants of St. Peter's on Sunday, October 29, 1899, and signed by the two church-wardens :—

"MY LORD,

"We, the communicant members of the Church of England worshipping at St. Peter's, Plymouth, heard with very deep sorrow and regret our vicar announce his intention to discontinue the use of 'incense and processional lights' at the Holy Eucharist.

"We feel it our duty to support him in the course he has taken, and which he felt he ought to take under the present distress in the Church.

Apart from this, we desire to emphasize most strongly that the disuse of incense is entirely contrary to the wishes of the congregation.

"We therefore, as a united congregation who have peaceably enjoyed our rightful Catholic privileges here in this church for over thirty years (a portion of which time the present Archbishop of Canterbury held the Bishopric of this Diocese) desire to place on record our respectful, but emphatic protest against the discontinuance of these most Catholic, Scriptural, and Evangelical adjuncts of worship, for the following reasons:—

"*Firstly.* Because we believe that it is not in accordance with the tradition and practice of the Catholic Church of Christ, that the Archbishop's Erastian 'opinion' in this matter should be forced upon a perfectly united body of loyal Church people.

"*Secondly.* Because we believe these adjuncts of Christian worship to be in accordance with the teaching of the Church in England, as embodied in the 'Ornaments Rubric.'

"*Thirdly.* Because there is no ceremony of the Church so distinctly enjoined by Holy Scripture as is the offering of incense.

"We do, therefore, most respectfully beg your Lordship to accept this memorial as a protest against the surrender of these lawful ceremonies of the Church, and earnestly pray that you will use your influence as the Bishop of this diocese for their restoration. And we most solemnly pledge ourselves (God helping us) to do all that lies in our power to win them back to their

lawful usage for the honour and glory of His Name."

Little more need be said about this unhappy moment in the history of St. Peter's and its aged vicar. The bulk of the people remained faithful to the line marked out by themselves in the foregoing protest, and in a comparatively little while they had their reward. Prynne, both publicly and in private conversation, made it clear from the outset that his action was taken to meet a "present emergency," and was not to be regarded as final. "I cannot," he told Dr. Bickersteth, "say anything as to the future." When, in 1901, Bishop Bickersteth, on account of ill-health, resigned the Bishopric of Exeter, Prynne regarded himself as no longer bound by the compliance he had made to that prelate. At this time, therefore, he not only reverted to the liturgical use of incense and processional lights, but also began to Reserve the Blessed Sacrament for the sick and dying—a practice the necessity of which had been increasingly impressed upon him by the needs of his parish and, also, by his own personal requirement in moments of serious illness. The reversion to the use of incense, which had for thirty years formed part of the ceremonial at St. Peter's, was an occasion of great joy to the priests and people of that parish; while the Reservation of the Blessed Sacrament in St. Peter's had long become a necessity, which the nearness of All Saints' Church, where Reservation was instituted years ago, only partially met. And so, at the end as at the beginning of his ministerial life, Prynne was to be found in the fighting line,

exemplifying in teaching and practice his regard for the rightful heritage of the Church he had so long and loyally served. He had, as he was wont to say, seen many so-called "crises" during his sixty years' ministry. Baptismal Regeneration, the Real Presence of our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar, the Sacrament of Penance, the use of Eucharistic Vestments—these were some of the principal objects of attack during his life, and each in turn had only emerged the stronger from the assaults made upon them. That a similar experience would reward those who in later days were content to work and wait, perhaps to suffer, for what they knew to be right, he was convinced. The only danger which seemed in these latter days to threaten such a consummation was, he was wont to say, internal division. Writing on this point in 1900, he remarked:—

"There is one great danger which is, I think, a pressing one, and seriously threatens the success of those great principles for which we have been contending for the last sixty years in connection with what is called the Oxford Movement—it is division amongst ourselves. No one, surely, who has watched recent events in the Church can ignore the fact that both priests and laymen, whose Catholic principles and orthodoxy are unimpeachable, have thought and acted differently in the very trying and difficult circumstances in which the action of the Bishops has placed them. Unless mutual respect and mutual tolerance are maintained between those who have taken different views of their duty, and have

acted accordingly, I cannot see how it is possible to avoid such a serious rift as will weaken the forces which make for Catholic truth and practice, and throw back, for an indefinite period, the great causes which we all have at heart. Such organizations as the English Church Union, which has, in the past, done so much for the defence of the faith and just rights of the Church, cannot but be seriously weakened if such charitable consideration between men who are one in principle is not largely exercised. I would not venture for a moment to judge, much less condemn, those who from a conscientious conviction of duty have felt bound to act differently to myself. I know too well the severe struggle which I underwent myself in coming to a decision as to my own duty, to venture to reflect adversely on the conduct of others who came to a different conclusion; but I do ask for myself and for many of my brother priests, whom I sincerely respect and admire, the same just and charitable consideration as we readily concede to those who differ from us. Let us pray for each other that God will guide us all aright and bring us into godly union and concord, that we may together, with a united front, resist with greater strength the forces which are arrayed against us, and not fritter away our strength in contentions among ourselves, when we are, I trust, one in our great desire to promote God's greater glory and the good of His Church and people."

CHAPTER XII

Prynne's Jubilee at St. Peter's (1898) and Golden Wedding (1899)
—Death of Mrs. Prynne—Sermon at Truro Cathedral Com-
memoration—Last appearance at St. Peter's—Final illness and
death—Episcopal sympathy—Funeral services at Plymouth and
Plympton St. Mary—Prynne and preferment—Personal remi-
niscences by "E. M. G.," Mr. John Shelly, Mr. Paul Swain,
F.R.C.S., and others.

THE closing years of Prynne's life were marked by many periods of intense bodily suffering, and from 1890 onwards there were moments when it seemed to those around him that death was imminent. Again and again, however, he rallied in the most wonderful way, his splendid constitution enabling him to recover from the most serious illnesses, and to resume some considerable share in the services of St. Peter's. Failing sight, too, caused him much inconvenience, preventing him from using his pen with the freedom to which he had always been accustomed. An operation upon his eye, performed with remarkable success when he was approaching eighty years of age, relieved this source of trouble, but the weight of fourscore years pressed heavily upon him in many ways. His weaknesses were entirely physical; mentally he retained all his vigour and brightness to the close of his days. In 1898 he kept the jubilee of his appointment to St. Peter's, the occasion being marked by an endeavour to complete the tower of

the church at a cost of several thousands of pounds. At this time, as a writer remarked, it was difficult to describe the peculiar affection and respect with which he was regarded; and where his personal influence was not known, the influence of his books and hymns had extended. It was added:—

“So far as the records have come into our hands, we have read the heated, virulent, and utterly untrue things that used to be said of him; but in none of his replies can we find one unkind or even impatient word. Firmly, but kindly, without heat and without exaggeration, he denied the misrepresentations that needed to be denied, and explained over and over again the teaching of the Church which was—and is still to some extent—so grievously misunderstood. It is no wonder, therefore, that with a full heart many of us have this week offered such a man our congratulations, and God our thanksgivings, on his commencing the fiftieth year of his work in the parish of St. Peter's.”

Another very happy occasion occurred on April 17, 1899, when Prynn kept his Golden Wedding, his ten children, two daughters-in-law, two sons-in-law, and thirteen out of his twenty-seven living grandchildren being present. The happy day began with a celebration of the Holy Eucharist in St. Peter's, at eight, the aged priest being celebrant, his wife and all his ten children communicating; and at the close of the service Prynn's well-known hymn, “Jesu, meek and gentle,” was sung by the family. Lord Halifax, who

ever entertained the most affectionate feeling of regard and admiration for Prynne, was associated with other friends at a distance in a special message of congratulation on this happy occasion ; and at the reception which formed part of the day's proceedings, two of Prynne's oldest and most devoted friends, Mr. John Shelly and Mr. Paul Swain, were present. Among the many affectionate attachments of so long a life, it is probable that, outside his family circle, Prynne's warmest regard and fullest confidence was given to these two devoted laymen, whose labours for the Church at large have long earned for them the respect and esteem of all who know the greatness of their influence and work.

In the illnesses and weakness consequent upon advancing years, his wife, the devoted and loving partner of practically his whole life in Plymouth, tended and helped him with a solicitude which was beautiful and pathetic to witness. With her husband she had shared in the horrors of the cholera visitation of 1849, bravely facing the dangers and dreadful conditions of that period, making light of the hardest toil in her efforts to relieve the awful suffering all around. Throughout the early days of persecution this good woman was ever at hand to cheer and sustain him, when friends were few and difficulties of every kind had to be faced and met. With her husband, she knew what it was to experience the loss of practically every worldly possession for conscience' sake ; as will be remembered, even her wedding-gifts were seized within a short time of her marriage, to meet the cost of legal proceedings undertaken by her husband in the attempt to clear his character from

the baseless and scandalous charges with which the enemies of the Church assailed him. Through evil report and good report she had been the faithful helpmeet of her husband, and her death in March, 1901, was indeed the severest personal trial that could have befallen one so aged and infirm as Prynnne had then become. Nevertheless the old man bravely took up the threads of his work, in spite of his great sorrow, and on many subsequent occasions assisted in the services, or preached to his flock, at St. Peter's. At the invitation of the Bishop of Truro he preached in the cathedral of his native county at the Commemoration Festival of 1902, and officiated at the opening of the S.P.G. bi-centenary exhibition in Plymouth Guildhall. Recovering from another serious illness in 1902, he again assisted in the services of his beloved church, and early in 1903 was engaged in correspondence with clerical brethren in London and elsewhere, endeavouring to secure an additional helper for his clerical staff. Failing in this effort, Prynnne went on endeavouring to take a share in the services, celebrating on Sexagesima Sunday, and preaching on the morning of Quinquagesima. On Ash Wednesday he assisted for the last time in the services of his church, and it is probable incurred the chill which caused a return of the old complaint which had laid him by so many times during the latter years of his life. The illness was throughout a painful one, and from the first his friend, Mr. Paul Swain, gave no hope of recovery. On the evening of Friday, March 13, he received the Blessed Sacrament for the last time, seeming then to be not far removed from death. But for nearly a fortnight

longer he lingered, suffering a great deal of pain with that gentle patience which was ever one of his chief characteristics, until early on the Feast of the Annunciation—the anniversary of his admission to the Church in 1821, and of his ordination to the priesthood in 1843—all pain was ended and his soul had passed to the great waiting Church beyond the veil.

As soon as his death became known numerous messages of sympathy were received by his sons and daughters; the Bishop of the Diocese being one of the earliest to send his condolence and episcopal blessing to the bereaved family. The funeral arrangements, and the services which preceded them, were carried out in accordance with the principles for which Prynne had so long and unfalteringly contended. After Evensong on the Sunday the body of the aged priest was borne from the Vicarage in Wyndham Square to St. Peter's Church, where Vespers of the Dead were sung. In all the solemn ceremonies of those hours, it is doubtful whether anything more deeply impressive was witnessed than that long procession, when, amid the gleam of swinging lights, preceded by the great cross of the church, and followed by those who loved him, the body of George Rundle Prynne was carried between dense masses of his sorrowing people into the church he had raised and where he had so long and faithfully ministered. At such a moment, who that knew anything of that life just ended on earth could forget that in this very square, not sixty years before, the scene had been one of wild and uncontrollable uproar, again and again repeated, and ever directed against that saintly priest for whom men now sorrowed so deeply?

The scene was a sermon and a revelation, stronger far than any spoken word, the like of which comes not often in the lives of men or the history of parishes.

On the following day, Monday, March 30, 1903, after the body had rested before the altar through the night, the Great Sacrifice was continually pleaded during the early hours of the day. The assistant-clergy of the church at this time were the sacred ministers at the Requiem celebration, namely, the Rev. E. R. Hudson, the Rev. B. H. Kingsley, and the Rev. W. H. Morgan. The Rev. A. Preedy, too, Vicar of Saltash, for eleven years Prynne's devoted and loyal helper at St. Peter's, and the Rev. J. Mercer Cox, Vicar of Plympton St. Mary, took part in the service, many other clergy being present in the church. The interment took place at Plympton St. Mary, a beautiful little churchyard some five miles from Plymouth. Here, in the midst of God's Acre, almost under the shadow of the grey old Devon church, the body was laid in its flower-lined grave, side by side with that of his wife, while the choir sang the Easter hymns, and last of all the *Nunc dimittis*, which he had so often desired might be his last conscious speech on earth.

The funeral of the poet-priest was both memorable and notable, affording convincing witness to the beauty and perfection of the long and splendid life of one whom people had come to love so well. Clergy from far and near; former colleagues and helpers; laymen who had learnt the highest truths from Prynne's lips and had borne with him the burden and heat of the day; Sisters of Mercy whose work he had helped to make possible in the great



PRYNNE'S GRAVE AT PLYMPTON ST. MARY.

(From a Photograph by Bernard F. Prynne.)

[To face page 196.]

towns of England ; little children, for whom he ever had a bright and loving word ; poor people from his parish of St. Peter's ; and simple country-folk, like those among whom his earliest ministry was spent,—it was good that these and such as these should gather round the grave of the “ private priest,” as he loved to call himself, whose life's ministry had been bound up with them and their necessities, to the exclusion of so much that men rightly prize and deserve. Standing here one felt how truly it might be said of George Rundle Prynne—

“ Plain patient work fulfilled that length of life ;
Duty, not glory,—Service, not a throne,—
Inspired his effort, set for him the strife.”

Many of Prynne's friends regretted that he had never received any preferment or ecclesiastical honour from the authorities of the Church, and—as Lord Halifax once told him—they did not always feel able to preserve silence on this point. Prynne himself, however, had no such feeling of regret ; he dearly prized the marks of confidence which were given him by his brethren of the clergy and his fellow-townsmen, and for the rest, may we not say in the words of one of his closest friends, “ his work was that of a mission priest, a guide of souls, and it was his most fitting honour and reward that he led so many to the feet of the Saviour and trained so many for the inheritance of the saints ” ?¹

To quote some of the many very striking tributes evoked by the death of this good priest is a temptation. In the cathedrals of Exeter and Truro, in the churches

¹ “ In Memoriam,” *Guardian*, April 1, 1903.

of the Three Towns, and in many another place, reference was made to the tender and faithful witness of the life of Prynnne, such testimony being general, and by no means limited to any one school of thought in the Church. The burden of all the testimony thus given was this—however men might differ from him, however widely they might disagree with his line of action at times, yet each and all recognized in his gentle life the fruits of the Holy Spirit, love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance. Prynnne's life, with peculiar clearness, seemed to reveal that message of goodness of which the writer of the "Imitation of Christ" speaks when he says, "Many words do not satisfy the soul, but a good life comforteth the mind, and giveth great confidence toward God."

Three appreciations of a special and personal character may fitly find a place in these pages. The first is from the pen of one of Prynnne's many spiritual children; the second is contributed by Mr. John Shelly, of Plymouth; and the third is a summary of the Lenten address given in St. Peter's on the Sunday after Prynnne's death by his old friend and medical adviser, Mr. Paul Swain.

I

Looking back into my earliest childhood, almost my first memory of Mr. Prynnne is his coming to preach in my father's parish, some miles out of Plymouth. Even at that date it was considered rather a daring step on my father's part to ask him, and I can remember considerable excitement about the matter. My father drove him from the station, and I sat silent

in the back seat of the pony-carriage, wondering that a man of such extreme gentleness should be the cause of so great a stir.

It was a Wednesday in Lent, and the service was at 8 p.m.—a usual hour then in the country, when people worked late, and were not too tired or apathetic to come to church after a day's work. The church was as full as it was on a Sunday; I cannot tell whether this was owing to a curiosity to hear Mr. Prynne, or whether it was that church-going in Lent was a more ordinary thing then than now. Probably both reasons had their weight; anyhow, the large country church was filled. The best part of a lifetime lies between then and now, and yet across all the years the memory of that sermon is as fresh as if it were yesterday, and of the text—"What shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" He held up the picture of a pair of scales, and on one side he put all the riches, pleasures, and glories of the world, and dwelt on the enjoyment of them for seventy or eighty years—and in the other scale he put a human soul and eternity. I can still feel the silence creeping over the church, and see the upturned faces, as the eternal standard shone out clearly, and the appeal went home. Then we sang "Saviour, when in dust to Thee," to a tune never now heard, and went home through the mystery of the night, on a high cobbled pathway, with a lantern for the benefit of the stranger. I declined my supper of bread and cheese, and went hungry to bed, hoping that gaining the world would never tempt me to lose my soul.

We live in so rapid an age that it is difficult for

us to imagine the stir in Plymouth about things that are now universally adopted. Mr. Norrington, who was Mayor of Plymouth at the time, can remember going to St. Peter's when the excitement was at its height, and the Bishop of Exeter (Henry Philpotts) came to Plymouth to take part in a service, hoping thus to quiet the public mind. He read the Lessons, but though Mr. Norrington sat in the front seat, so great was the hubbub of the mob outside that not one word was audible. At the conclusion of the service the Bishop was got into his carriage outside, which was pursued by the yelling multitude, throwing sticks and stones. And what was the cause of all this uproar? Mr. Prynne preached in a surplice.

The Rev. Walter Guppy Abbott, afterwards Vicar of St. Luke's, Old Street, E.C., told me that when he was curate at St. Peter's, and they began to sing the Psalms on Sunday mornings, it was thought that their extreme practices could go no further. But in considering the state of things at that time, it must always be remembered that the West of England was some years behind the rest of the country in many ways.

Yet it must not be thought that the chief memory of Mr. Prynne is as a fighter of battles, even for the truth; of course that aspect formed a share of his work, but his abiding characteristic was a deep love of souls. Almost the last time that I saw him he said, "It is all mission work at St. Peter's." Probably Henry of Exeter, to whom the Church owes so much, saw this power in Mr. Prynne when he first sent him to Plymouth.

Mr. Prynne was not in the strict sense of the term

a Ritualist : he was too much like his old friend, Dr. Pusey, to form a pattern for those young clergy whose great aim is to be "correct." In the early days of Church revival, some one asked Mr. Prynne what was the meaning of a priest wearing a biretta in church ? And his face lighted up as he gave the answer, "Oh yes, it has a meaning ;" he paused for a moment to reflect, then he added frankly, " But I have forgotten what it is."

But in considering Mr. Prynne's early work at St. Peter's, it is very difficult to present a clear picture of things as they were at that time, for, perhaps, it may truly be said, that the children to whom is most abundantly shown the glory forget too quickly the servants who did the work. To have at least a better idea of the state of affairs, it must be remembered that Plymouth itself was very different from what it is now. I was talking the other day to an old inhabitant who remembered the town in 1824, and though it was a little difficult to sift dates and get a true picture of 1848, when Mr. Prynne came to St. Peter's, it was certainly useful as showing a condition now passed away, which would produce its own characteristics. Mr. W—— remembered Mr. Hawker, who had owned Eldad Chapel before it was bought by the Church, and he could see him now, walking down the street in his buckled shoes, and his wife "looking like a duchess." Then he went back to the fearful storm in November, 1824, before the breakwater was built. Plymouth had three churches in those days—the Old Church (St. Andrew's), the New (Charles), and Stoke ; Union Street was a marsh where you could go snipe-shooting.

Here I tried gently to bring him to the point by the mention of Mr. Prynne, and I succeeded. "Mr. Prynne," he said, "ah, yes, he was so Christian; never heard him say an unkind word of any one. I was brought up a Dissenter, but their want of Christianity and truth turned me into a Churchman. One day at a council meeting one of them said, 'The nearer to Church, the nearer to hell.' Think of that! I broke with them then." And he went on with his memories of the Upper Barracks and the Lower Barracks, where men were flogged—a proceeding which he, as a boy, could see from his grandfather's yard. There was no sewage in those days in the Three Towns; a stream ran down the streets, and into this any refuse was thrown. Was it any wonder that cholera broke out in 1832 and again in 1849? The district of St. Peter's then was far more cut off from the better localities of Plymouth than it is now, and, with the exception of a small chapel, in a population of over five thousand, when Mr. Prynne came in 1848, there was not a single place of worship nor any school.

Then what was the state of Church feeling in the country in general, and in the West of England in particular, at this time? We have to turn back to what seems ancient history now, so rapidly is what is past forgotten in this busy age, and we see an excitement over the Gorham case which is transferred to-day to matters of less vital principle. We see, too, in the Diocese of Exeter, that it was the Bishop who stood in the forefront when an attack was made on the Faith, and who was in deed as well as word a Father in God to all his clergy. To read the "Letters of Archdeacon Denison" at that time will show any

who are inclined to despond about Church matters in England to-day, that we have battled through worse times.

But the one thing that will always be remembered in connection with Mr. Prynne is, that it was in St. Peter's Church in 1849 that the Daily Eucharist was first revived in England. To-day, in hundreds of churches over the country, the Sacrifice is offered daily with worshippers who have never known scenes such as that little band of workers lived amongst. For it was during the cholera outbreak of almost unparalleled horror that an English priest began day by day to plead the one availing Sacrifice; and those who joined with him might be called away before nightfall. In another place the story of these days is told, and still in country churchyards round Plymouth there are corners never touched where the cholera victims in their numbers were laid.

And yet, though of course the connection is close with Eucharistic worship and Communion, if you were to ask any one who had fallen under Mr. Prynne's influence what he had chiefly learnt from him I think the answer would be, "The fulness of the forgiveness of sins." It is no secret now that the little red book, "Pardon through the Precious Blood," was written by him. This work is known to thousands who have never seen St. Peter's; but there are not a few persons scattered over the world who will remember the quietness of the old church on Friday afternoons, emphasized by the chattering of sparrows in the ivy outside the windows—a thing which has entirely passed away with the old building,—old Mrs. Parsons moving silently about, dusting in the

distance, or on guard in the last pew in the church—so much a part of the proceedings that even when Mr. Prynné was away on his holiday she still remained in church on Friday afternoons, saying that “If the vicar did not do his duty, she should do hers.” Then the little vestry with its red-clothed table, and above the text on zinc, painted amid passion flowers, “They saw no man save Jesus only;” these are the things encircled in many a memory with the holiest and deepest moments of a lifetime.

That the reality of Mr. Prynné's religion made itself felt, even among those who professed little religion themselves, was once shown in a third-class railway-carriage on the Great Western, where several men of the working class were travelling, talking loudly of the things which interested them, and paying no attention to me behind my paper in the corner. Something was said about the preferment of one of the Plymouth clergy, and the chief speaker broke in with eager comment: “They are all alike,” he said, “it is only a question of money. That's what their religion means; if they can get more money they go somewhere else.”

The other men applauded this speech, but a change came over the Plymouth man's face, and he added, “Not quite all. There's Prynné now, he sticks to his work. He doesn't get much for it; but he isn't looking out for himself—that's religion.” Yes, that was also the opinion of Henry of Exeter when he backed up Mr. Prynné's work in the early days.

Half a century brings about great changes, and at the end of Mr. Prynné's long ministry, though, as he

said, "It is all mission work at St. Peter's," the condition of many things had been altered. Throughout the country the children were seeing the glory of the work which God's servants had done, and with increased opportunity had crept in a spiritual lassitude and a want of moral backbone. Perhaps this statement sounds hard, yet a comparison with the days of the Oxford Movement will serve to justify it. The doctrines for which the leaders of that movement fought are taught to-day by thousands; but, while crowds flock to the sung Eucharists, it may be asked—How many approach the standard of those early days in fasting, or take anything like the trouble then needed to go to an early Communion? Reflections like this help us to realize the religious atmosphere of the first part of Mr. Prynne's life, of which no history exists save that truest of all history—contemporary fiction. To read the stories in the now extinct "*Churchman's Companion*," is an astonishing as well as an humiliating revelation to the present generation. Then, as the Church was seen with a new light on her ancient splendour, there was a fervent earnestness in the minds of her children which made the Daily Service a delight, and caused them to spare no pains in the struggle after personal holiness. The realities of life stood out boldly, and less important things did not assume undue significance. That was the world in which Mr. Prynne lived, and we who knew him felt it. The love of God, the hatefulness of sin, the value of a soul,—these were linked together in one great motive. Perhaps the little prayer (at the end of his book of *Private Prayers*)—a prayer partly learnt from Dr. Pusey—shows the bent of his life:—

“Blessed Jesus, give us the gift of Thy holy Love, pardon of all our sins, and grace to persevere unto the end.”

It may be that the world is less serious to-day. I doubt whether Lent preachers send children home now in a frame of mind that makes them decline their suppers, and if they did, possibly some correct person would tell them that this was not what is meant by fasting, and that their zeal was altogether misplaced.

The last time that I saw Mr. Prynnne was during the Dedication Festival, the last but one of his life, and he was as full of interest as ever in Church work all over the world, telling me of Father Benson's account of Father Puller's work amongst the Ethiopians, and asking much concerning mission work in Africa. When the news of his death came I was far away from the country we both loved so much, and it was impossible to go to the funeral; but the thought of those for whom he had worked during a long lifetime seemed added to the reverent throng visibly present—those who died penitent during the cholera; girls rescued from sin; men, women, and children, chiefly poor, who had learnt to find pardon—these were the lives which his had most nearly touched. No honours had come to him, as men count honours, only a share in that mysterious heritage which St. Paul ventured to hold forth as his claim to spiritual aristocracy, of which so large a share is loneliness. Had Bishop Temple still been at Exeter, I venture to think that he would have been at the funeral, for no one recognized more keenly than he did the value of Mr. Prynnne's work. Had Bishop Philpotts been

there, our great "Henry of Exeter," I am sure he would have been present. But Mr. Prynne has passed to a world where human recognition cannot affect him, and as his body was laid to rest in the Devon churchyard, not far from the scene of his life's labours, those who stood by knew that his great soul was with God.

E. M. G.

II

Mr. John Shelly, of Plymouth, who was for close on forty years in close and affectionate touch with Prynne, contributes the following recollections:—

"It must be difficult for one who has not actually experienced all the movement and interest of the ecclesiastical life of the last fifty years to understand the extent of the influence which Mr. Prynne exercised from the first upon priests as well as lay people in the Church of England. It was an influence that was won locally against fierce opposition. When I first came to Plymouth, in 1857, he was still spoken of by Nonconformists and Low Churchmen almost with horror. I well remember how, some years later, a man who would now, I suppose, be called a moderate Churchman, refused an invitation to go to a service at St. Peter's as a thing almost impossible to be imagined. At the same time there was, even in 1857, an undercurrent of admiration of what Mr. Prynne had

done during the time of the cholera. When I first knew him he took no part in public affairs, and was seldom seen outside his parish. But his patience, his sweetness of temper, and his sincere piety were steadily winning their way.

“It must have been, I think, about 1863 that the Rev. Eugene Tracey, who was then a curate, virtually in charge of the mother parish of St. Andrew, first brought Mr. Prynne into actual contact with the Low Church clergy of the town. Mr. Tracey endeavoured, with some success, to bring the clergy of different parties together in social intercourse, and it was at a dinner at his house, as I have heard, that Mr. Greaves, the Calvinist Vicar of Charles, first met Mr. Prynne, their host having put them side by side. Mr. Greaves afterwards declared that he was delighted to find Mr. Prynne so sound and evangelical in his views; and Mr. Prynne, who was never narrow in his sympathies, began to love the simple piety of Mr. Greaves. The laity, however, were quicker than the clergy to admire Mr. Prynne, even when they did not follow him—and admiration often led them to follow. In the early 'sixties St. Peter's was beginning to attract a great number of young people, and particularly young men. I often saw there young officers quartered at Plymouth, and from many of the villages round young people used to come in on Festivals, and even to the ordinary Sunday and weekday services. At Christmas and Easter there were often a number of Nonconformists. All of them did not understand the meaning of the Festivals

as well as one I remember, who said, 'We don't keep Lent and we have no right to keep Easter;' but Mr. Prynne's teaching brought a great many to the church. The musical services, then still a novelty, and the vestments and lights drew some; but Mr. Prynne himself was the great attraction. His peculiarly beautiful voice, his serious manner, won and held the attention, and the plainness and obvious sincerity of his teaching made converts. But people were moved even more by hearing him celebrate the Holy Eucharist than by his preaching.

"From the first time that I knew him to the very end of his life, Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament was the one centre of his love and source of his influence, and all who heard him celebrate, all who came in contact with him, felt it to be so. The solemnity, the tenderness, the absorption of his manner at the altar cannot be described, but can never be forgotten. They live in the memory with the patience, the gentleness, and wisdom of his dealing with penitents. He seldom went far from Plymouth to preach, and it is astonishing that his influence should have been so wide. I have heard Father Lowder, who was a member of a Plymouth family, and Canon Body, of Durham, say how much they owed to St. Peter's; and constantly in all parts of the country, when people have known that I came from Plymouth, I have been first asked about Mr. Prynne and St. Peter's. Quite lately I heard from Canada of two ladies who said they owed all their Church teaching to Mr. Prynne. They had attended St.

Peter's when their father, who was an officer, was stationed at Plymouth, and had received as young girls the definite and clear teaching which they never forgot. About the same time I heard of a postman at Toronto who saw *St. Peter's Magazine*, which I had sent to some friends there, and began at once to talk of what he owed to Mr. Prynn. In the current (October) number of the magazine the present Vicar mentions the grateful testimony of an aged priest to Mr. Prynn's teaching. These are not singular but typical cases.

"Nothing, I think, in public life touched Mr. Prynn so deeply as his election by the clergy of the diocese to be their Proctor in Convocation. It was the first and, indeed, the only public recognition of his services to the Church. But what struck me most at the time was the general recognition that, in spite of his retired life, he was indeed a leader—to use his own phrase, one of the 'standard bearers of the Lord.' No doubt his writings, and especially the '*Eucharistic Manual*,' one of the first and still, I think, one of the best of altar books, contributed to make his name generally known; but still I am convinced that it was mainly the knowledge and report of his character and personal teaching that were the great means of his influence being extended, first in Devon and Cornwall, and afterwards in remote parts of the country. His was an extremely winning personality. The wonderful buoyancy and cheerfulness, which made him seem sometimes younger even than his children,

the smile and outstretched hand that one felt were so sincere, the quick understanding and sympathy, the grave and tender counsel—all these made every visit to him a happiness and comfort.

“And though his advice and teaching were always very plain and simple, one felt that there was behind them an accuracy and fulness of knowledge that inspired complete confidence. He thus became more than a parish priest. People, and especially the clergy, throughout the two counties, used to ask in any difficulty or when any important question arose—‘What does Mr. Prynne think? What is Mr. Prynne going to do?’ and nothing had greater weight than his opinion. And looking back over the forty years I knew him, I am surprised to find how unchanged his teaching was. There was change, no doubt, or rather development, of practice, but the underlying principles were always the same. It is quite a mistake to suppose that he was hurried by his curates or his lay supporters into excesses of ritual which his wiser judgment would have disapproved. All the developments of ritual at St. Peter’s had his well-considered and entire approval. Many indeed of those that have only lately attracted much attention began long ago, and to the end he was conscious of no change in his faith or doctrine. On the fiftieth anniversary of his coming to St. Peter’s, he delivered again the first sermon he had preached there, and said, what no one who knew him ever doubted, that from the beginning and throughout

his ministry he had always remained true to the Catholic faith which he had taught in his earliest days."

III

Mr. Paul Swain, F.R.C.S., speaking to the men of St. Peter's on the Sunday succeeding Prynne's death, said it was his great privilege that day to pay a layman's tribute to his memory. George Rundle Prynne had won for them, as lay people, two very great benefits, which could not be overestimated. First of all, through great suffering and persecution, he had obtained for them free access to the tribunal of penance, whereby they could have recourse to their parish priest in confession. How many sin-laden hearts he had unburdened, how many broken hearts he had healed, and how many timorous hearts he had fortified God only knew. The other great gift he had won, not only for them at St. Peter's, but for the whole Church of England, was the restoration of the Daily Sacrifice. That privilege was only won through great suffering. In 1849, when the dread cholera was raging in their midst, their noble vicar, in a most heroic manner, ministered to the sick and dying. He put up an altar in the cholera hospital and celebrated daily in order to communicate the patients. When the terrible scourge was over, the Daily Sacrifice was perpetuated at St. Peter's as an act of thanksgiving, and has never ceased from that day. It was the first restoration of the Daily Sacrifice since the Reformation. What better memorial of George Rundle Prynne's work could they

give him than to be more frequent in their attendance at this service ?

About Mr. Prynne's personal character, as one of his very oldest friends he thought he was entitled to say something. The prevailing characteristic of his life was love. He had never met so gentle, so loving a man. Under the most trying circumstances he never remembered one single instance when their late vicar lost his temper, or said an unkind word of anybody. Of his greatest enemies he always spoke with extenuation. Christ's words upon the cross must surely have been in his heart and upon his lips : " Father, forgive them ; for they know not what they do." The other characteristic of his life was firmness. Once convinced as to the rectitude of his position and of the fact that the course he was pursuing was the right one, nothing would swerve him from the point. Love and firmness of character were characteristics which do not always exist in the same individual, but they existed in Mr. Prynne's character. He quoted an incident which occurred during Mr. Prynne's last illness. He thought he would not be committing a breach of confidence to tell it. Some few days before their vicar died it became his (Mr. Swain's) duty to tell him one evening that he thought the time had come when he should receive his Viaticum. Mr. Prynne strongly objected, because he said it would interfere with the rule of his life as to fasting Communion. He (Mr. Swain) represented to him, what, of course, Mr. Prynne knew full well, that in his condition, that rule was always dispensed by the Church. And so the Blessed Sacrament was brought to him that night. The next morning the

first words Mr. Prynne uttered when he saw him were : " Ah, Swain, I had a visit last night from the *Medicus Medicorum*."

Through all the later years of his life, he had suffered more than fell to the lot of most of them to suffer, and yet he was never peevish, or complaining, and they knew how up to the last he stuck to his post and endeavoured to do his duty. It was quite amusing sometimes, how towards the end of the week he would endeavour to shirk seeing him (Mr. Swain) because he was afraid that his Sunday duty was going to be interfered with. There was one other trait of his character which he could not forget. That was his extraordinary humility. Who had ever heard Mr. Prynne boast of anything he had done? He was all unconscious of his greatness—for a great man he was, even though he died only the vicar of a miserable Peel parish, unrecognized by the respectable Establishment. Wherever they went they would meet strangers who would say : " Oh ! you come from Plymouth, and, therefore, must know Mr. Prynne." That had been said to him over and over again. A lady once saw a photograph of Mr. Prynne in a cottage in North Wales. She remarked to the occupant of the cottage : " So you know my old Vicar." The reply was : " Oh no ; but I have read his books and have heard so much about him that I secured his photograph." Mr. Prynne's reputation had gone far beyond Plymouth. His kindly nature had endeared him to and won the respect of those outside as well as inside the Church. The day Mr. Prynne died he (Mr. Swain) met a well-known Nonconformist minister, who was a personal friend of

his. He said to him: "Dear Mr. Prynne, I have been saying to myself a line from his own hymn: 'From terrestrial darkness to celestial light.'" Who was to be his successor was in God's hands. The appointment would be made by men in whom they might have the utmost confidence—men who would be undeterred by ignorant and popular clamour. He urged them, if they had faith in prayer, to crowd their church day by day and pray God that He might find them a worthy successor to carry on Prynne's work on his lines.

Prynne's death brought to mind many beautiful instances of his goodness to others. Of one such the memory had been well-nigh forgotten, and his family only learnt of it for the first time the day before his death. More than fifty years ago a house in his parish was on fire, and in an upper room there was an infant. Among the many persons drawn together by the fire no one dared to attempt a rescue. Then Prynne crawled up the stairs on his hands and knees and brought the child down to a place of safety. The child lived to be a man, dying eventually far from Plymouth, and the incident—never recalled by Prynne—was forgotten until the old priest's death, when many memories were evoked in the minds of those who recollected Prynne as a young man, going about in the midst of the cholera-stricken district in which eight hundred people died, ministering in the wooden hospital put up in Five Fields Lane, and performing deeds of heroism day after day, any one of which is worthy to be cherished and held in remembrance.

One of Prynne's chief characteristics was his intense reverence when within the precincts of the church. The nearest approach to anger was shown when he noticed any act of irreverence or levity on the part of visitors, or still more on the part of decorators or those connected in any way with the church. As a natural result, in few churches is greater reverence shown than by those who assist in the services of St. Peter's, be they members of the choir, Church-workers, or the children in the Sunday schools, or those in the day schools who attend the Saint's Day Eucharist. Once when the Vicar was walking across the Sanctuary of his church, a young curate, with somewhat exaggerated views of things in general, said: "It's a pity, vicar, that we never had a proper altar in this church, is it not?" The somewhat flippant manner in which the question was put, was resented by the Vicar, who, frowning slightly, said, "What do you mean?" To which the young priest answered, as if teaching his aged vicar, "Well, it is usual in Catholic churches for altars to be made of stone, and not wood with only a stone slab like ours." The answer was prompt and characteristic, "I have always understood the greatest of all sacrifices was offered on the wood of the cross."

One other testimony and reminiscence, this time from the Sisters of the Holy Nativity, Knowle, whose House of Rest is at St. Mary's, Plympton, where his body lies. Writing in their paper, "*Deus est Caritas*," they remarked :—

"We cannot end without remembering one who has passed to his rest and who was closely

bound up with the first beginning of the House of Rest—the late dear Vicar of St. Peter's, Plymouth. There were three functions here at different times in which he took part. First, at the opening of the House of Rest in 1880, for which he wrote a beautiful hymn which was sung at the Blessing of the House; then again six years later, when by the goodness of the founders we enlarged our borders, and two large rooms were built for the patients; and lastly, a few years later, when the little house adjoining was bought and added to the House of Rest. Both these additions were dedicated and blessed by Mr. Prynne. But the last visit he paid to the House of Rest, about four years ago, the year of his jubilee, is the dearest memory of all. A Sister was staying then at Plympton who had known him in the early days of our work here, and wished to see him, and so one hot summer's afternoon he and Mrs. Prynne came over together. The Sisters who were here will never forget that visit; Mr. and Mrs. Prynne were like two children enjoying a holiday; they had tea on the balcony with the Sisters, and went home laden with flowers. Mr. Prynne was getting very blind then, and we felt it an honour to take care of him down the steps and dangerous little places. One little thing was so characteristic of him. A poor old woman who was coming here as a patient, came out by the same train. Mr. Prynne, when he saw her, took her bag and little luggage from her and carried them up the hill. He was nearly eighty then, and very feeble, but it was just one

of the kind actions which seemed to come naturally to him, and of which numberless instances are coming to light now. It is good to think that his last resting-place is the churchyard of St. Mary, Plympton."

Such memories might be multiplied. But the whole life of George Rundle Prynne is a beautiful memory and an inspiration—a memory of goodness growing ever more and more perfect, pouring itself out in splendid service and loving self-sacrifice for others; an inspiration, telling us more clearly than words can do of the triumph of truth over falsehood, of good over evil, of gentleness over mere clamour and force. Such a life, with its complete self-abnegation, its whole-hearted consecration to the service of God and man, and its beautiful simplicity, is indeed a witness of that ancient good which abides within the Church, and which again and again shines forth so clearly as to compel the attention of all men. May we not say of George Rundle Prynne, in the "In Memoriam" words he himself penned on the death of his friend and fellow-priest Charles Fuge Lowder, "*Mors Janua Vitæ*"—

The standard bearers of the Lord
Are falling one by one.
Calmly they die within their ranks
When the Lord's work is done.
They pass from suffering, toil, and strife
To rest, and joy, and endless life.

Though dead, they speak to us and say,
Stand firm, be true and brave;
Trust in your Lord when foes press on,
For He is strong to save.

And if you fall in His great strife,
Fear not, death is the gate to life.

* * * *

Lord, give us grace to follow them
As they have followed Thee,
That where Thy faithful servants are,
There we may also be,
And live and reign with them and Thee
Throughout a blest eternity.

CHAPTER XIII

Prynne's theological works—The "Eucharistic Manual"—The Real Presence—Non-communicating attendance—Archbishop Longley and the "Eucharistic Manual"—Prynne's profession of faith—Second Eucharistic work—Dislike of mere ritualism—Obedience to episcopal authority—"Pardon through the Precious Blood."

IN tracing the story of Prynne's life, which was, above all else, that of a Mission priest, it has seemed best to leave for final consideration those literary activities which formed such an important part of what may be called his wider work, and the knowledge of which has long since spread throughout the Anglican Communion. Roughly divided these works fall into two classes—first, and chiefly, his Eucharistic teaching; and secondly, hymnology. In the first, his "Eucharistic Manual," published in 1866, was, unless we are mistaken, the earliest book of its kind prepared for use in the English Church; while, as regards hymnology, one of his hymns—

"Jesu, meek and gentle,"

has long since attained the widest popularity, and now finds a place in almost every collection.

The preceding chapters of this book will have established the fact that all through his ministerial life the Holy Eucharist was the very sum and substance of his teaching. Nowhere more than in this is the remarkable consistency of Prynne's life and teaching

apparent—a consistency so great that on the fiftieth anniversary of his appointment to St. Peter's, Plymouth, he preached again his first sermon as vicar of that parish, for the purpose of showing that his teaching remained fixed and unaltered. His first sermons to his Cornish flock at Tywardreath, and later at Clifton, embody precisely the same belief in regard to the Holy Eucharist as is stated in his later publications, "The Eucharistic Manual" (1865), and "The Truth and Reality of the Eucharistic Sacrifice" (1894). With that intense evangelicalism which was so conspicuous a feature of his spiritual life, he seems to have had from the beginning of his priestly career an extraordinarily full and clear grasp of that doctrinal teaching in regard to the Holy Eucharist which Pusey and the other Tractarian leaders were seeking to revive. To him the Real Presence of Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar was not so much a Doctrine as a Fact: this was apparent in all his teaching, and in personal intercourse with him to the end of his days. Not only to his own people, but to that larger public which he began to reach very early in his ministry, Prynne put this great fact more clearly than was customary in those days. Thus, in "A Few Plain Words about what every Christian Ought to Know, Believe, and Do, in Order to be Saved"—first published in 1860, and afterwards circulated by many thousands—we find these words concerning "the Holy Eucharist; or, the Communion of Christ's Body and Blood":—

"This is the most wonderful and the most mysterious of all the sacraments, since, under

the outward elements of bread and wine, Jesus Christ, our Lord, "verily and indeed," gives His body and blood to every faithful communicant. This is brought to pass through Christ's blessing and the consecration of the priest. We need not curiously enquire, as did the Jews of old, "How can this man give us His flesh to eat?" What Christ has spoken, He is certainly able to bring to pass."

This teaching he affirmed again and again; indeed it was the basis of all his ministerial words and actions. In 1869, preaching in his own church, he said:—

"I am exceedingly anxious that you should most clearly understand our teaching relative to the Holy Eucharist, because it is *the* doctrine which is becoming the most prominent subject of controversy amongst us. We desire to have no reserves as to our teaching on this or any other point of Christian doctrine. We speak as candidly and openly as we can. We, then, dear brethren, who minister in this church, do most thoroughly and absolutely, without any reservations whatever, believe in the doctrine of our Lord's *real presence* in the Holy Communion. We do not assert it with one breath, and explain it away with the next; but we assert it without attempting to explain it at all. We say it is a great mystery. The *mode* of His presence is utterly beyond any explanation we can give; but it is as *real* as His presence upon

earth after His Incarnation—as *real* as His presence at the right hand of God the Father.”

The clearness and absolute simplicity of such teaching as this leaves nothing to be desired, and presents a striking contrast to the line of thought more generally typical of the period under consideration. There were, of course, at that time many thoughtful and devout persons who held such belief as Prynne here expresses: writings of Bishop Philpotts and Bishop Hamilton of Salisbury, for instance, were largely in agreement with the lines he adopted. But the Tractarian movement in its earlier stages was in the main academic: and the learned writings of such men as Pusey influenced the scholarly few rather than the general public. It was at this point that Prynne stepped in and did immense service to the Catholic Faith, stating in simple language and accessible form the Church's almost forgotten teaching in regard to her central act of worship.

“The Eucharistic Manual,” of necessity prepared, like so many other of his works, in the fragments of a very busy life, was first published in 1865 (London: Joseph Masters and Co.), and the interest aroused by its issue is witnessed to by the fact that a second edition was called for early in 1866. This Manual, the first of its kind to be published in the English Church, attracted attention on many grounds, and notably by the provision it made for those English Churchmen who, “with the members of every other portion of the Catholic Church throughout the world,” exercised their “undoubted right” of “attending the celebration of the Holy Eucharist for worship, without

at the time communicating." Such provision—as to the wisdom of which even some of the Tractarian leaders themselves were not in agreement—was bound to meet with criticism, some of which Prynne thus dealt with in advance :—

“It is sometimes said that to encourage such a practice (*as non-communicating attendance*) is to lead people to substitute attendance at the Sacrifice for Communion. This theory has surely been sufficiently tested during the last two or three hundred years. Christian people have been, practically, driven out of church at the commencement of the chief and only Divinely appointed act of Christian worship. But has this practice had the effect of leading our people to set a true value on the Holy Eucharist, and to become communicants? Non-communicating England is the reply. Not one in a hundred, probably, of our people are communicants. Nay, further, the great mass even of church-goers simply ignore the one distinctive act of Christian worship altogether, and satisfy their consciences by attending at Matins and Evensong, and listening to sermons. What they have never seen or joined in, they have learnt to forget.

“It is believed by an increasing number of English Churchmen, that a different and better result may be obtained by returning to a more Catholic practice; and that, if our people can be led to remain and worship their Incarnate Saviour in the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar, they will not long rest until they have also feasted upon

their Sacrifice, and tasted and seen how gracious their Lord is."

Thus the Preface, written, be it remembered, in 1865, when the "Quarterly Communion" and the First or Second "Table" were still the prevailing features in many a parish. In taking so pronounced a line on non-communicating attendance, Prynne undoubtedly went beyond the teaching and practice of some of the older leaders of the movement. Indeed, in this and several other matters, he lived long enough to share in the due and proper development of those principles which the older leaders laid down, and to advance somewhat upon practices which they nowhere erected into a final standard.

In the second edition of the Manual, Prynne incorporated several "Acts of Adoration" and an Act of Spiritual Communion compiled by the late Canon T. T. Carter, with whom he ever shared much in common. As to the general plan of the Manual, the value of which was again and again borne witness to by Catholics throughout the world, it was divided into four main parts: (1) The Holy Eucharist: instruction; (2) Devotions before Communion; (3) The Office of Holy Communion; (4) An Appendix, with thanksgivings, intercessions, form of self-examination, etc. It was, of course, compiled from various sources, and its character evidences Prynne's wide range of reading and intimate knowledge of the Church's devotional literature. The wide circulation of this Manual, which in seven years passed through eight editions, drew upon it considerable attention, and it formed the subject of discussion in the House

of Commons, where its teaching was denounced by several members in the strongest terms. Following upon this condemnation the then Primate, Archbishop Longley, in a detailed criticism, took exception to some expressions contained in the book. These, he maintained, were "exaggerated and misleading," going beyond the teaching of the Church of England. Prynne, having carefully weighed these objections, was convinced that "they did not go beyond the mind of the Church of England, as illustrated by the teaching of the Primitive Church, to which she so constantly refers us." Instead, therefore, of withdrawing the statements complained of, Prynne recapitulated the chief points for which Catholics contended, and appended to the tenth edition of his *Manual* (1875) "a summary of doctrines which, as Catholic Christians, we believe and teach, touching the Holy Eucharist and the Christian Priesthood; doctrines which were constantly and consistently taught by two of the best-known and most deeply respected Bishops who have lived in the passing generation—the late Bishop of Exeter (Philpotts), and that orthodox and saintly Bishop, whose loss is yet fresh in our memories, Hamilton, late Bishop of Salisbury." This admirable "Summary of Eucharistic Teaching" was undoubtedly of immense value in days when clear statements of doctrine were neither so numerous nor so easily accessible as they have since become: and by its means it is safe to say that the faith of thousands of Catholics was moulded, and their devotion to our Lord in His Blessed Sacrament increased. Prynne's own profession of faith in the teaching which he put forth was as strong as words could make it:—

"These doctrines, touching the Holy Eucharist, and the power of the Priesthood in connection therewith, I, in common with a very large number of both clergy and laity in the English Church, firmly hold—not simply as matters of *opinion* (we should have few inducements to hold them very tightly, if that were the case), but as portions of the Faith once delivered unto the saints. We believe in them with the same kind of faith that we exercise when we profess our belief in the existence of God, or the Incarnation of our adorable Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. We are *quite sure* that they are an integral part of that sacred deposit of Gospel truth which has been committed to the Church. And believing this with our whole hearts, we *must* and we *will* teach them, at all risks and at all hazards. All doctrines of the Catholic Church are revealed *facts*, and, like other facts, are capable of proof by evidence. *Opinions* may be shaken about by every blast—by argument, by change of circumstances, even by fashion; but *facts* are, to use a common expression, stubborn things. No amount of talk, no degree of popular clamour, can upset a fact. The sun would shine on in his wonted splendour, though all the blind people in the world should refuse to believe that there was such a body. God would reign on in all His majesty and glory, though all mankind should combine to deny His existence; and so also will those truths, which God has made known to His Church, remain true, in spite of any amount of opposition, in spite of any degree of popular clamour or violence."

"Our enemies," as he declared at this time, "will have to cut out our tongues before they shall stop us from declaring the full truth touching the most holy and blessed Sacrament of the Altar." These words—and Prynne's life bore witness that they were no idle boast—suffice to prove the vital character of his belief in the great Sacrament of the Church. Doctrinally his teaching on this fundamental point may be described as identical with that of his old leader, Dr. Pusey: devotionally the Holy Eucharist was the very centre of his life on earth, to which all else for which he contended bore the most intimate and inseparable connection.

Prynne's second and only other theological work of any importance was his book, "The Truth and Reality of the Eucharistic Sacrifice, proved from Holy Scripture, the Teaching of the Primitive Church, and the Book of Common Prayer" (Longmans, Green, and Co., 1894). This book—which was dedicated to Viscount Halifax, "with sincere appreciation of his able and consistent efforts to maintain the principles and spiritual rights and liberties of the Church of England"—was mainly written during one of his long illnesses. Its object was "to bring together in a concise form, some of the most salient facts and arguments which have been adduced by learned divines in support of the truth and reality of the Eucharistic Sacrifice, and to answer some popular objections which have been raised against the Church on this subject." But the book was far more than a mere compilation. On the contrary, while quoting ancient and modern authorities in support of his thesis, Prynne in vigorous fashion furnishes admirable

teaching on the whole doctrine of the Blessed Sacrament, and does it with a simplicity which makes his work most valuable to the average reader. In the Preface to this book, written when nearing the close of his life, his words entirely harmonize with what he had said on the same matter thirty years earlier:—

“My own firm conviction, after more than fifty years’ experience as a priest of the Church of England, is, that we shall never gain the enthusiastic love of our people for their Mother Church, or secure their fidelity to her, until we bring them to realize that the Catholic Church is God’s own creation for the promotion of His greater accidental glory and the salvation of souls—that the Holy Eucharist is Christ’s own appointed act of worship and means of close communion with Him, and that this divinely ordained service can only be rightly and duly celebrated in God’s spiritual Sion, His Holy Catholic Church, by those who have received authority from Him to act as His ambassadors and the stewards of His mysteries. It is because our people have lost their grasp of these great truths that they are so easily alienated from the Church, and become a too ready prey to every new thing, in the way of religion, which the cunning craftiness of man may invent.”

Seldom, surely, has the Catholic position been stated with greater clearness than in these words. Prynne, when he had completed the treatise, submitted it to the Rev. F. W. Puller, of the Society of

St. John the Evangelist, Cowley, and before publishing it availed himself freely of the many excellent suggestions offered by that well-known scholar. After its appearance the author's heart was gladdened on more than one occasion by the receipt of letters from bishops abroad and fellow-priests at home, telling him how they valued his book and found its teaching helpful. The Bishop of Quebec, in his charge of 1898, made considerable use of the book, and urged the clergy of his diocese to get it and study it for themselves. In a personal communication to Prynne the Bishop told him that when Vicar of South Acton he looked upon the work at St. Peter's as in many respects a model mission, deriving much help from its example.

Such communications often cheered the veteran priest as in his quiet study in Wyndham Square he sat amidst his books and papers, keenly alive as ever to the activities and necessities of the Church, and anxious always to do his part in her great struggle against evil and ignorance. Moments there were—it is needless to deny it—when so looking out upon the world he felt some anxiety—not as regarded the Church, but rather as to the wisdom of those responsible for her guidance. Toward the end of his days, too, he frequently expressed his misgivings as to the wisdom of some of his clerical brethren in the Catholic party, who by their course of action would, he feared, hinder rather than help that extension of Catholicism for which he had ever laboured.

That advance was a necessary result of the teaching of the older Tractarians Prynne frankly recognized, but, as he observed in his little book "Treachery"

(1889): "Some of them would, I think, have said that a few of the 'Ritualists' had gone too fast and too far, and had thus endangered the great principles for the extension of which they (the early leaders) spent their lives, and thus retarded their wider acceptance." He also remarked: "When I sometimes hear young priests abusing their Bishop and talking of the hopelessness of the existing state of things in the Church, I cannot but look back on the past, and wish that they could see the far blacker state of things that we had to face in the early days of the Catholic Movement, and realize the enormous advance that has been made all along the line during the last fifty years. I sometimes think if only their eyes could be opened, like those of Elisha's servant, they would see that the power of God is ready at hand to help, and I pray that they may have patience and faith to face the passing difficulties with courage and humility." Mere "ritualism" he abhorred; and the introduction of teaching or practice which was Roman and not Catholic he strenuously and firmly opposed to the end of his days. Like every other conscientious priest, he had, early in life, examined for himself the Roman claims; and, having satisfied himself as to their untenability, his loyalty to the Anglican Communion was henceforth firm and unswerving. In those early days of his ministry to which we have referred, Prynne read deeply, gaining a profound knowledge of the Fathers, of Pusey's works, and of such writings as Palmer's "*Origines Liturgicæ*." His diary often contains such entries as show that in Cornwall and Clifton whole nights were devoted by him to theological study and the preparation of his

sermons. Thus grounded, Prynné knew with equal certainty what he believed and what he rejected, and was always prepared to assert either when occasion demanded. This sense of accuracy made him impatient of what he termed "exaggerations of Catholic truth" in pulpit or print; statements which tended to unsettle people's faith as to their position in the Church; and terminology which might be associated with the modern and erroneous teaching of the Roman Communion in regard to the doctrines discussed. Taking the word "Purgatory," for instance, he says:—

"I am convinced that the introduction of this word into sermons and instructions misleads people, who quite understand by it the modern popular teaching of the Romish Church. Such comparatively modern Romish teaching, connected as it is with the doctrine of indulgences, I believe to be unscriptural and a grave corruption of primitive truth. I think, therefore, that the use of the word in public teaching should be avoided, as leading the people to think that teaching identical with current popular Roman teaching."

He was equally averse to the introduction of unauthorized and Roman services, such as Benediction and the public recitation of the Rosary, entirely failing to reconcile such developments with that loyalty to his communion which was so strikingly manifested throughout his life. When, some years before his death, he sought his Bishop's permission for the use of special epistles and gospels on the minor saints'

days, and it was refused, Prynne yielded implicit obedience and adhered to the Prayer-book offices. In matters such as these he was, it is to be feared, sometimes misunderstood by the younger Catholics around him. Of this he was fully aware, as the following words, addressed to a colleague a few years before his death, testify:—

“I trust that He who has given me courage in the past to maintain Eucharistic truth in the face of much opposition, will not fail me during the short remainder of my life, or allow me to sink into the grave with the stain of cowardice upon my name.

“It is sadly true, and much to be deplored, that we cannot in all things obey our Bishop; but I do not think that because we cannot obey him in all things, consistently with the claims of conscience and higher duty, that we are, therefore, exempt from obeying him altogether in matters on which he has the right to speak. It is not a mere pretence of obedience to obey as far as we can.”

And again—

“It is a matter of principle with Catholic Churchmen to obey the Bishops, as those ‘set over them in the Lord,’ in all things consistent with their common obligation to that standard of faith and worship to which they are equally bound” (“Treachery,” p. 37).

Such words as these, written only a few years before his death, might find their parallel in the

advice he gave to his brethren much earlier in his career. Thus, in 1874, we find him pressing the "overwhelming necessity," which even then existed, of "consolidating the High Church party." It might, he contended, be needful "not only that so-called Ritualists should abstain from any advance in ceremonial, but also that they should show a readiness to draw in and curtail in matters which are unnecessary as not involving any special principle." Reviewing the ecclesiastical situation not long before his death, he expressed grave misgivings as to whether the practice of ceremonial had not been too often permitted to precede the teaching of which it was only meant to be the outward expression. He was also disquieted by symptoms of what he conceived to be less strictness and discipline of life among the younger clergy than should properly be associated with their high calling. Contrasting the present with the past, as he was able to do, it seemed to him that the reaction from that austerity of life which was apparent among the Tractarian clergy of the 'sixties, had resulted in a freedom which was carrying young priests to-day to the other extreme. For himself, although gifted with artistic perceptions which caused him to derive the fullest enjoyment from such things, he abstained from attending any theatres in his own locality, preferring to do so rather than risk giving offence to good people who entertained old-fashioned ideas on this point. When on holiday, and relieved from his ordinary clerical duties, his enjoyment of a good play or musical entertainment was intense. The love of music was always a very great solace to him, and his knowledge

of the art enabled him to assist in bringing the choral services of St. Peter's to the high pitch of excellence they long since obtained. In preaching and in speaking the beauty of his voice was always apparent, enabling him to give unusual emphasis and power to his utterances. This gift he retained to the end.

One other literary work calls for mention here—a small book, truly, but one which has brought thousands of souls to the Sacrament of Penance and a knowledge of the power of their Lord's love. "Pardon through the Precious Blood" needs no analysis or description: it is simply the handbook or guide to that ministry of reconciliation which Prynne so long and so lovingly exercised, and for the vindication of which he gladly suffered persecution and insult. The extent and blessedness of Prynne's work in the spiritual direction of souls can never be told; it was one for which he was endowed with special gifts of inestimable value. On this point, as on other main doctrines, it is interesting to note the identity of his teaching at the beginning and end of his life. Thus, in 1899, he who in 1852 had witnessed to the Church's possession of this means of grace says:—

"I speak strongly on this point because, with the experience of fifty years, during which I have been largely called upon to exercise this ministration, I have come to the full conviction that it has been the means, under God's blessing, of saving many souls from spiritual shipwreck, and that many of the evils from which we

avowedly suffer would have been greatly modified if our people could have felt that, without difficulty or suspicion, they could freely have availed themselves of the spiritual guidance and help which it was the duty of their clergy to give them.

"Very many who have drifted away from us into Romanism or various forms of dissent would still have been with us, very many who swell the vast number of non-communicants would have shared with us in the sacred Feast of God's Love ; for many are held back by the consciousness of past sin, which they feel they ought to confess before they are restored to the full privileges of the Church, but who have been told by false teachers that such relief and restoration is not to be had in the Church of England, and thus they drift on to the end, 'unhousel'd, disappointed, unanel'd.'"

"Via Dolorosa," a book of devotions for the Stations of the Cross, published in 1901, and sundry sermons on special occasions, make up the remainder of Prynné's prose works. Together with other well-known writers, he was associated in the preparation of a "National Commentary on the Book of Common Prayer," which Bishop Forbes, of Brechin, contemplated producing, but which never came to a completion. In this work, the plan of which was extremely comprehensive, Prynné, whose "Eucharistic Manual" had already appeared, was to be responsible for the section dealing with the Communion Service. The work was to have been published in numbers in order to make it accessible to the many.

CHAPTER XIV

An early hymnal—Association with “Hymns Ancient and Modern”—
“Jesu, meek and gentle”—Circumstances of its composition—
Collected poetical works—A hymn of the Annunciation.

OF all Prynne's writings that which has attained the widest popularity is his hymn—

“Jesu, meek and gentle,
Son of God Most High,
Pitying, loving Saviour,
Hear Thy children's cry.”

This hymn, every verse of which breathes the gentleness which was so characteristic of its writer, is known and loved in many parts of the world. It was written in 1856, in the midst of stormy days at St. Peter's, and was first published in 1857 in “A Hymnal Suited for the Services of the Church: together with a Selection of Introits.” This Hymnal, compiled by Prynne and published by Masters, represented a considerable advance upon anything of the sort previously accessible, and was speedily adopted in a number of churches, being twice enlarged during the few years that it was before the public. The early Tractarians, and notably Neale, Keble, and Williams, had already supplied a great want in English hymnology, and enriched it with

many beautiful translations from the Latin office-hymns, some of which men like Thomas Helmore were beginning to set to music. But in the majority of churches this leaven had not begun to work, the "Mitre Collection" still furnishing worshippers with such sentiments as the following—

"What hath God wrought, let Britain see,
Freed from the Papal tyranny."

Prynne, anticipating "Hymns Ancient and Modern" by several years, brought out the first part of his Hymnal in 1854; in it he had put together 177 hymns, arranged in the order of the Church's year, and including a number translated from the Latin, some by himself, others by various scholars. Of the hymns published in this early collection, eighty-four were subsequently included in "Hymns Ancient and Modern." After the Hymnal had been published a little while it was supplemented with seventy additional hymns, one of these being—

"Jesu, grant me power to plead,"

an adaptation by Prynne, of peculiar force and beauty, from the Latin of St. John Damascene. The 1866 edition of the Hymnal—making the fifteenth thousand—included 433 hymns and introits, and of the former nearly 200 were subsequently inserted in "Hymns Ancient and Modern." As the latter hymnal began to attain its remarkable success, Prynne relinquished the idea he had entertained of preparing a music edition of his Hymnal, and later he formed one of the small committee engaged by the Rev. Sir Henry Baker to assist in the revision and enlargement of

"Hymns Ancient and Modern," which was accomplished in 1875. The Hymnal—of which very few copies now exist—looks small and quaint in comparison with the spacious and expensive productions with which we are familiar to-day: but, like so much else of Prynne's work, it was the outcome of pioneer labour in a field which at that early period was comparatively untouched. Regarded from this point of view, its excellence is remarkable.

Concerning the hymn most widely associated with his memory, Prynne himself has said:—

"It is commonly thought to have been written for children, and on this supposition I have been asked to simplify the fourth verse. The hymn, however, was not written specially for children. Where it is used in collections of hymns for children it might be well to alter the last two lines in the fourth verse thus—

" 'Through earth's passing darkness
To heaven's endless day.'

Almost every year it is sung on the occasion of the festival of the Holy Innocents in Westminster Abbey. It has been translated into several languages, and has been the means of great blessing in our own and other lands. I composed it one summer's evening just forty-six years ago, and I don't suppose the entire composition took me more than half an hour. My wife, who was a very good musician, was playing to me from my favourite composers at the time, and, as she played, so the words of the hymn came into my

mind. I did not at first think of reducing them to paper, and it was only after the entire hymn was conceived that I at last took an envelope from my pocket and scribbled the verses on the back."

The most general and touching use of the hymn in Prynn's own church was after the celebration of the Holy Eucharist. This was especially so when it was sung at the Solemn Requiem celebrated on the occasion of Prynn's funeral service, with the body of its saintly author lying at peace within the chancel of his loved church. Of late years it has always been sung at St. Peter's to the tune written for it by Dr. Hoyte, of All Saints', Margaret Street, W., which setting was greatly loved by Prynn.

Prynn's collected poems and hymns were published in a volume twenty years before his death, chief place being given to the title poem, "The Soldier's Dying Vision." The poems and hymns were, as Prynn observed, "written in fragments of time during five and twenty years of a busy life." They are naturally of unequal merit; but throughout them all there runs that strain of simple piety and loving Christian teaching which was ever so characteristic of their author. As one of the critics observed when the volume was published, "Prynn has not written a hymn which does not bear the impress of the full loving heart from which it springs."

We may perhaps fitly conclude this chapter with one of Prynn's little-known hymns, written by him for the feast of the Annunciation of the Blessed

Virgin. This festival, it may be remembered, was strikingly associated with Prynn's life. On it in 1821 he was made a member of the Church by baptism; it was on the feast of the Annunciation that he was admitted to the priesthood in 1842; and early on the morning of the same festival, sixty years later, the days of weakness and of pain were ended and his soul passed to join the waiting Church beyond the veil. Thus the poet-priest sings of this feast of Our Lady, and the hymn seems to us worthy of a place in one or other of the Church's hymnals:—

*“And the angel came in unto her, and said,
Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with
thee : blessed art thou among women.”*

Sing to-day with holy joy
And exultant gladness ;
Lo ! an angel comes from heaven
To dispel our sadness.

Whither hies the Spirit blest ?
To a Virgin holy,
In sweet converse with her God,
In her chamber lowly.

What the message which from heaven
Gabriel is laden,
As he hovers round the shrine
Of the saintly maiden ?

‘ Hail ! choice vessel full of grace ;
Hail ! blest Virgin holy ;
God in heaven loves to dwell
With the meek and lowly.

“Favour thou hast found with God
Before every other,
Of the Saviour of the world
To become the Mother.”

GEORGE RUNDLE PRYNNE

Meekly kneels the Virgin blest,
Her sweet spirit bending
To God's will in glad consent,
To our joy unending.

Praise we then our God to-day
For Christ's Incarnation,
Which, through Mary, brought to man,
Pardon and salvation.

APPENDIX

THE PRYNNE MEMORIAL

THE memorial which finds a place in St. Peter's, Plymouth, of the saintly priest whose name will ever be associated with that church and parish, is a mural painting of the Church Triumphant—a decorative and symbolic treatment of the attitude of Christ and the angels and departed saints to the saints on earth. This notable painting was executed by Edward A. Fellowes Prynne, the late Vicar's third son, whose previous paintings, "The Desire of All Nations" and "The Magnificat," are well known. The memorial occupies a large space of wall over the sanctuary arch, thus appropriately connecting the old and new church, and is a finely conceived piece of church decoration, beautifully carried out. The picture, which may be seen in the illustration of St. Peter's Church given in this volume (p. 154), was thus admirably described in the *Church Times* on the occasion of the unveiling by the Bishop of Crediton, on November 2, 1904:—

"The subject chosen is the Church Triumphant—a decorative and symbolic treatment of the attitude of Christ and the angels and the saints departed to the saints on earth. In the centre is represented Christ of the Resurrection, the Head of the Universal Church; the God Man, King, Great High Priest, and Victim, 'the Lamb that was slain,' crowned with a glorified crown of thorns, and robed in priestly garb; His right hand raised in blessing, and His left holding the banner of the Cross, and pointing up, as though to teach that all must take up the Cross and follow, and come to Him through suffering and sacrifice.

"A vesica of glory with cherub angels surrounds the central figure, and the words from the Revelation, 'Thanksgiving, power,

riches, wisdom,' etc., loom out in gold from the background. The Holy Innocents, as the first to suffer death for Christ, are grouped at His feet. At His right hand is seated the Blessed Virgin Mother, crowned as Queen, and close to her kneels St. Joseph holding the lily of Purity. On the left kneels St. John the Baptist, who still points to the 'Lamb of God;' and next to him is the first great penitent, St. Mary Magdalene. Seated in clouds around the central group are the Twelve Apostles, St. Paul, and St. Stephen. Above and behind is a long semi-circle of Saints and Martyrs, conspicuous amongst whom are the Patron Saints of the various parish guilds.

"The arts of poetry, painting, music, architecture, are dedicated to God's service in the persons of Dante, Angelico, St. Cecilia, David, and Solomon. Beyond these are yet other rows of saints, and multitudes in white robes, representing countless angels and spirits.

"In the lower part of the composition is represented the Old Dispensation. In the left spandril is depicted the three Magi, to represent the offering of the riches, wisdom, and honour of the world; while in the opposite side the lame, halt, blind, and poor, and the slave, represent the offering of the sorrows and sufferings of humanity to the glory of God. Below these the two archangels, Gabriel and Michael, gaze down on the Church Militant, with great golden trumpets in their hands, ready, by God's command, to sound them for the Final Judgment.

"The ceremony of unveiling this beautiful memorial was at once most solemn and impressive. The church was crowded almost to overflowing by those who had known and loved the faithful priest who had worked in their midst for fifty-five years. At the close of Evensong, the Bishop of Crediton, preceded by the crucifer bearing a processional crucifix, with torch-bearers on either side, proceeded to the chancel gates, and facing east, read the prayers of Dedication, the whole congregation kneeling awhile. As the veil was slowly lowered, a cloud of incense rose from the censer immediately below, and the glowing colours of the great painted subject above were for a few moments enveloped in a floating mist of that at once most beautiful and scriptural of symbols—incense. Many were the prayers that were offered for

him who had been so long their guide, and many the eyes that were dim.

“Bishop Trefusis then preached an eloquent sermon, basing his remarks on Psalm cxxx. He said that the picture had been placed there that they might recall the largeness of heart of him who ministered among them as their priest in days gone by. There was nothing little about him. His vision was not cramped and narrowed, nor centred in self. His heart was one that went out to all people, so generous, and so wide in its embrace, that it reached down to the very poorest, the most suffering and the most needy that dwelt around the House of God. As that church was reared, he became a great messenger of truth. There, from the first, his attitude corresponded to that portrayed in the picture before them. There, with Christ, he presented the great sacrifice of the Atonement day by day. He felt that there was hope for the Church in the plenteousness of the Redemption wrought upon the Cross. The hearts of him and his partner in life were enlarged towards the poor of that parish, and they never ceased to teach that those who were sorrowful and poor, and wretched and miserable, could be made bright and happy, and pure and holy. He ministered in his pleadings and his intercessions day by day towards the great end of full redemption for all who needed it, and his attitude throughout was that of the faithful priest towards the flock committed to his care. He had led them out of individual religion into a religion that embraced every brother, every member of Christ in one great body.”

INDEX

- ALL SAINTS', Plymouth, formation of, 136; appointment to, 161, 165; Prynne's letter to a co-trustee, 162
Annunciation, Hymn of the, 241
- BICKERSTETH, Bishop, Prynne's relations with, 172; letters from, 173, 175, 181
- CHAMBERS, J. D., on the method of hearing confessions, 84; on the result of the enquiry (1852), 105
Cholera visitation at Plymouth, 48, 59
Coates, Rev. W. Howard, letter to, 138
- DAILY Eucharist, restoration of, 154, 158, 203, 212
Devonport, St. James', Miss Sellon's early work in, 63
- EDUCATION, Prynne and, 136-138
English Church Union, membership of, 171; vice-presidency, 171
Episcopal enquiry (1852), 71-91
"Eucharistic Manual," the, 223-228
- GORHAM Case, the, 26, 202
Gutch, Rev. Charles, on the result of the enquiry, 106
- HATCHARD, Rev. John, letter to Bishop Philpotts, 71; charges against Prynne, 71, 107
Hetling, Rev. G. H., on the cholera visitation, 54
"Hymns Ancient and Modern," Prynne's association with, 238
- "JESU, meek and gentle," 239
- KEBLE College and the patronage of St. Peter's, Plymouth, 161
- LEEPER, Rev. H. H., 165, 182
Looe, the church in (1826), 6
Lyne, the Rev. C. E., 8, 19
Lyne, the Rev. J. Leycester, at Plymouth, 146
- MIDDLETON, the Misses, and St. Peter's, 124, 152
Mother Kate on the work at St. Peter's, 124
- NEALE, Rev. J. M., letters from, 103, 123
Newspaper comments on St. Peter's, Plymouth, 92, 93, 108, 110, 192
- PETER'S, St., Plymouth, formation of, 28; new church, 152; the patronage of, 160; protest of the communicants, 186; Prynne Memorial in, 243
Philpotts, Bishop: ordination by, 8; characteristics as a prelate, 25-27, 113; letters from, 37, 41, 51, 77, 97, 102, 104, 118; interview with, 37; on the introduction of almsbags, 40; relations with Dr. Pusey, 62, 113; on confession, 69, 97; exoneration of Prynne, 91; on the enquiry, 104; confirms at St. Peter's, 108; on Miss Sellon's work, 118
Prynne, Dr. Edward (brother), 5
Prynne, Edward A. Fellowes (son), 243
Prynne, George H. Fellowes (son), 153
Prynne, George Rundle, parentage and birth, 1-4; early life in Cornwall, 5-7; school and college, 7-8; curacy at Tywardreath, 8-13; curacy at Clifton, 14-18; curacy at Par, 19; curacy at SS. Levan

- and Sennen, 21-24; appointment to St. Peter's, Plymouth, 24; marriage, 31; opening of St. Peter's Church, 32; beginning of opposition, 33; work during the cholera outbreak, 48-59; consecration of old St. Peter's, 60; association with the Devonport Society, 65; the enquiry of 1852, 70; the Latimer libel action, 80; on the charges made by the Rev. J. Hatchard, 72-79; on confession, 98; renewed opposition to, 106; riots at St. Peter's, 108; relation to the Devonport Society, 116-122; on the growth of sisterhood life, 125; rescue work in Plymouth, 126-131; erection of St. Peter's Mission Chapel, 134; formation of All Saints' parish, 136; religious education, 136-139; formation of Guilds, 140; use of missions, 148; erection of new church, 153; presentation at Plymouth, 157; Proctorship to Convocation, 159; relations with his Bishops, 167-174; on the Archbishop's Opinion, 175-190; Jubilee and Golden Wedding, 191, 192; death of Mrs. Prynne, 194; illness and death, 194-196; tributes to, 197-218; theological works, 220, 236; memorial at St. Peter's, 243
- Prynne, John Allen (father), 4; death of, 20
- Prynne, Susanna (mother), 4, 7
- Prynne-Latimer libel action, 79-83
- Pusey, Dr.: meeting with Prynne, 16; correspondence concerning St. Saviour's, Leeds, 17, 23; on Wesleyanism, 22; on the lines of the Revival, 45; presence at consecration of St. Peter's Church, 60; on the allegations against Prynne, 86, 103; on Miss Sellon's early work, 64; Prynne's relations with, 122
- SELLON, Miss: first work at St. Peter's, 48; establishment of the Devonport Society, 63; work during the cholera visitation, 53, 55-59; development of the Sisterhood, 116; association with "Father Ignatius," 147
- Shelly, Mr. John, on Prynne, 207
- Sisters of the Holy Nativity, 216
- Society of the Holy Cross, the, 168
- Society of the Holy Trinity, foundation of the Plymouth House, 65; work at St. Peter's, 53; Prynne's relations to, 116-122
- Swain, Mr. Paul, on Prynne, 164, 212
- TEMPLE, Dr., and St. Peter's, Plymouth, 155, 170
- WANTAGE Community, the, and St. Peter's, 125

THE END



GEORGE RUNDLE
PRYNNE

BX
5199
.P7
K4

A. Clifton Kelway

